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*WATER UNDER  
THE BRIDGES*



BY SIR NEVILLE HENDERSON  
British Ambassador, Berlin, 1937-1939

FAILURE OF A MISSION

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*Photo - Bassano Ltd*

*Philip Henderson*

# *WATER UNDER THE BRIDGES*

By

The Right Honourable

SIR NEVILE HENDERSON

P.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.



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RUTHIN CASTLE,  
NORTH WALES

April 24th, 1942

DEAR SAVAGE,

You were good enough to be my literary agent for *Failure of a Mission*, and I would like you to be my literary executor after my death; the fact being that the doctors here say that my case is such that there is nothing which can be done. They give me about six months to live, possibly less; at most a month or so more.

It is not pleasant being under sentence of death, and I want to do something which will not only distract my mind and keep it from thinking too much, but also something which may possibly benefit, even though it be to a small extent, my surviving relatives and dependants.

As you know, I always promised that I would write something for you to publish on the lighter side of diplomatic life. I had meant to do this when the war was over and when I had recovered all my effects from Berlin, including my diaries and papers and photographs and a heap of other things which would be indispensable for me in the writing of such a book. I had hoped to complete something really worth while, which it should have been, as I was fortunate in my thirty-four years' service abroad to have been appointed to all the most important posts at the most interesting moments. The proof of that is in the bare facts. I had nine different posts (three of them twice), and eight of them were Embassies, i.e. major posts, or ranked as such, and only one was a Legation, or minor post. I had fourteen chiefs, amongst whom were Sir Claude MacDonald, Sir George Buchanan, and Sir Ronald Lindsay. This merely stresses the importance of the posts to which I was lucky enough to be appointed. I had photographs of these fourteen distinguished chiefs hung on the wall of my office in Berlin. I used to hope that they might inspire me with good counsel, and I often used to wonder what they thought of their erstwhile Secretary or Counsellor. I should have liked, of course, to have included a reproduction of these photographs in any book which I wrote about my service under them.

But these photographs are lying at Berne in four vans containing all my effects from the Berlin Embassy, and there is no chance of recovering them now till the war is over. And I cannot, or rather am not in a position to, wait till then.

So, as I say, to distract my mind I am going to try to write the history of my life out of my head. It will be a poor, a second-rate affair, but I cannot help that. You will be able to judge whether it is worth publishing, and I leave entire discretion in that respect to you. It can but be the skeleton of what I had intended, but even so there may be something of interest in it. Anyway, I shall do the best I can in the short time which remains at my disposal.

When I had more ambitious plans for this book I contemplated calling it *Water Under the Bridges*, but now I think a more suitable title would be *Episodes of a Diplomatic Career*. It is for you to decide the appropriate moment, if any, for its publication.

Yours,

NEVILLE HENDERSON

## PREFACE

I WAS PRIVILEGED, as his Literary Agent, to receive the trust of Sir Nevile Henderson and I was most proud to become intimately concerned with him in his writing of *Failure of a Mission*. For many hours and even weeks he and I worked together upon this book, often burning the lights until the very small hours of the morning at his hotel, and as time passed I realized the inherent honour of the man and above all his sublime love of his Country. It is not for me to comment in any way upon his work as Ambassador in Berlin, nor even to answer the few of his enemies who saw fit to put their pen to paper when he could not answer them—there is nothing easier than to vilify when a man cannot, either by reason of position or death, reply.

During the closing months of his life I visited him regularly and frequently, and I was most deeply impressed by his patience and resignation.

He told me that he was a dying man, but always in face of his suffering he was brave as I could never hope to be myself. I encouraged him to write this book to pass the weary, dread hours, and his letter speaks for itself.

As his Literary Executor I print it because he made it his express wish that it should be the preface to *Water Under the Bridges*.

I am most proud of the trust he saw fit to repose in me, and I retain the memory of a great Patriot, a loyal friend, and a most Valiant Heart.

RAYMOND SAVAGE

PRINCES HOUSE,  
39, JERMYN STREET,  
LONDON, S.W.1  
*February 1945*





## CHAPTER I

SOME years ago, speaking at Buenos Aires at the annual dinner on November 30th of the St. Andrew's Society of the River Plate, I said that I was a Scot who had lived in exile all my life, first at school in England and afterwards abroad in the service of my country. I might have added equally well that I was a Scot who had been born abroad, since it was an acquisitive grandfather who first came South and settled in England in the early days of Queen Victoria. Like so many others of his race, he prospered exceedingly outside Scotland, and when he died was worth nearly half a million, no inconsiderable sum in those mid-Victorian days. He left to his three sons, in addition to his Scottish estate at Park on the Clyde, south of Glasgow but too far up the river to be of value except from an agricultural point of view, two properties in England—one Randalls Park, near Leatherhead in Surrey, and the other Nuthurst Lodge (as it was then called), near Horsham in Sussex. It was there that I was born.

Robert, my father, as the eldest of the three, was given first choice, and wisely selected Nuthurst Lodge. When the house was rebuilt in 1882, it was renamed Sedgwick Park because the park enclosed the ruins of the ancient castle of Sedgwick, notable for its double moat and at one time the property of the Dukes of Norfolk, but uninhabited since its confiscation to the Crown after the execution of the then Duke by Queen Elizabeth for his complicity in the Babington plot. In the days of Charles I the estate formed part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza, and after varying fortunes it was bought, in 1862, by my grandfather from a Mr. Tudor Sutton-Nelthorpe. John, the second son, inherited Randalls, and William, the youngest, the Scottish property at Park. It constitutes a sad commentary either on the effect of death duties or else the diminishing financial ability of my grandfather's descendants to note that all three estates were later sold in the same year, 1931, by their separate owners.

Sedgwick, where I was born on June 10th, 1882, stood on a high ridge, strategically important since early British and Roman days, a dominating point of the forest of Anderida, or Andredsweald, and looking over the South Downs and Chanctonbury Ring, than which I know no more satisfying view in all England. From the roof of

the house one could see the stretch of the Sussex coast from Selsey Bill to Beachy Head, and in my youth, before the gap at Lancing became built up, one could sometimes see, on very clear days, the sea itself and often the smoke of steamships more than twenty miles away across the Downs. The natural beauty of the site was perfected by the great talent of my mother as a landscape gardener. She was a sister of Reginald Hargreaves, of Cuffnells, who married Alice Liddell, one of the daughters of Dean Liddell, of Christ Church, Oxford, and the original of *Alice in Wonderland*. Whilst she was still a child, Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) gave her the manuscript of it, but she was ultimately obliged to sell it, fortunately for a very large sum.

From practically nothing, except its four great avenues, my mother transformed the grounds of Sedgwick into one of the most beautiful gardens of England. Actually it was one of the first of those published in 1902 in the famous Country House and Gardens Series in *Country Life*. Forty years later, when my mother's work had attained its full perfection, it appeared once again in *Country Life* as the home of Mr. Walter Abbey, the Sussex brewer, who bought the estate after my mother's death from my sister-in-law. Such details may be uninteresting to those who read this history, yet they have a bearing on it. Environment plays its part in the moulding of character, and if Sedgwick did nothing else for me it did give me a certain natural love of beauty, an instinctive good taste in seeking beauty, and a definite aversion to the ugly and the mean. Nor am I sure that constantly looking over wide spaces, as one did at Sedgwick, does not broaden one's outlook in respect of all the various problems of life. Narrow-mindedness seems inconceivable in such surroundings. The importance of environment is a study which science and national planning have too little heeded and which might well be given more attention in that new democracy which is to follow the present war. Few can enjoy such advantages from environment as I did in my youth, even though the heavy Sussex clay did make one slow in the uptake. Everything possible should be done to avoid the ugly and the mean and to rear the youth of this wonderful country of ours in surroundings worthy of it and of its future.

Such, by good fortune, was my home for nearly fifty years, thirty of which, however, I spent almost uninterruptedly abroad. But each time that I returned to England the white cliffs of Dover meant Sedg-

wick for me, and when my mother died in 1931 and my home was sold by my elder brother's wife, something went out of my life that nothing can ever replace. My father, who managed the family businesses of R. & I. Henderson and of the Borneo Company, and was a Director of the Bank of England, had died suddenly of heart failure in 1895. During the next thirty-six years my mother, a wonderful and masterful woman if ever there was one, was the presiding genius at Sedgwick, which was hers for her lifetime. So long as she lived what was left of the family centred round her and held together, but with her departure the link which kept them there vanished. There had been four of us, a girl and three boys. My sister Violet, who was the oldest of us, married Lord Leitrim in 1903. My elder brother, Evelyn, after serving in the South African and 1914-18 Wars, married a daughter of Sir William Clerk and died in 1925, leaving three children; while my younger brother, Reginald, who had been one of the early settlers in Kenya and had married a daughter of Colonel Clifton Brown, of Holmbush, died out there in 1916 when serving with the K.A.R.

Such, then, was the family, of which I was the third. From my earliest days I gave evidence of one of my besetting sins—love of the easiest way, or the line of least resistance. I was round and fat and found rolling easier than walking. I would roll everywhere rather than go on two legs. I was lost all one day, and the ponds in the garden were anxiously dragged for me; nor was I found till the evening, when I got hungry—under a sofa where I had rolled and fallen asleep. But, though idle, I was always easily amused, and have it on the best authority that I never was known to cry, not even when I lost my temper, which, according to the family, was another of my more obvious vices. But it was a reputation largely based on one incident, when I chased my elder brother round and round the nursery table with a pair of scissors and, having run him to a standstill, stabbed him through a finger of the hand which he put up to protect his face. The scar on that finger was always in later years held up to give point to the accusation of my bad temper.

The only toys I cared for were tin soldiers, and I doubt if I was ever happier than when I was fighting. Of that I had plenty as a boy. Evelyn was eighteen months older than I, but overgrown (both my brothers were about six foot four). I, on the other hand, did not start to grow till I was nearly eighteen and had left school, but was very

sturdy and compact. The result was that my elder brother and I, so far as strength went, were very evenly matched, and we fought every day and all the time. So much so that we had to be sent to different preparatory schools. When we did go to the same public school, we at first shared a room. But after two halves, other arrangements had to be made because the furniture suffered so severely in our battles. After we grew up we were always the best of friends; but I have always thought that it would have been better for me in after-life to have had a brother in my youth who could have beaten me and instilled a little more discipline into me.

But battles or no, boyhood at Sedgwick was wonderfully happy and healthy. Until we went to our preparatory schools we never wore anything but kilts and were seldom either sick or sorry. In those pre-motor days life was more secluded than it is now, particularly as none of the children of our immediate neighbours were of the same age as ourselves. Outside the family itself our chief companions were the Hargreaves boys at Cuffnells. There were three of them also, Alan and Rex being almost exactly the same age as Evelyn and myself. The other, Caryl, was a good deal younger. He and I are the only survivors of that band, for both Alan and Rex were killed in France in the 1914-18 War, Alan in the Rifle Brigade and Rex in the Irish Guards. Rex was my particular friend, and his death caused me greater personal sorrow than any other loss during that war.

Boyhood, though happy, was uneventful, and no particular incident recurs to my mind except being whipped when I was eight, by my father, for telling a lie. Once thereafter was I flogged, and that was by Mr. Cameron, the head master of my private school at Mortimer, for practising charging, as at football, with Schomberg Trefusis on the way to church. A few more whippings in my youth would, I feel now, also have been salutary. But I was good at work, with a marvellous short-term memory which was extremely useful for examinations and that helped a lot at school. Up to the age of between eight and nine we remained at Sedgwick, with first a French and later a German governess. I was too young to have much to do with the French one, and my early education was almost entirely provided by the German, Fräulein Geiss, or in other words Miss Doe. I remember her well, and her grounding in German was eventually to prove very useful to me. Though I was never a good linguist, and not even fluent

in my own tongue, early training gave me at least a passable accent both in French and in German.

And so to school. My elder brother to Mr. Tabor's at Cheam and my younger and I to the Rev. Lovett Cameron at Mortimer. Boys were not so closely tied to their mother's apron-strings in those Victorian days. The family coachman escorted me down to Mortimer on my first journey there. Thereafter I had to go alone, which meant travelling from Horsham to Victoria, across London from that station to Paddington, and from there to Reading, where one had to change trains and where I remember eating an unripe pear which made me exceedingly ill, and I have never cared for pears since.

It is no bad thing to be accustomed early to looking after oneself. When I was only six or seven I had my adenoids removed. It was at that time a comparatively new operation, and arrangements were made for Sir Thomas Clutton, who was the great authority on the subject, to perform it at St. Thomas's Hospital. I believe my mother was ill at the time. Anyway, I went up to London by myself, drove from Victoria Station to an uncle's house, where one of the servants told the cabman where to go and paid him his fare in advance. I was all alone when I walked into that great hospital.

I have a vivid recollection, too, of the operation itself. I was taken into a vast and empty hall, with a small operating table in the middle of it. The only persons present were the anaesthetist, a nurse, and Sir Thomas himself. I climbed on to the table, and a green baize bag was put over my face and I was chloroformed. But I was apparently not given enough and woke up too soon. I opened my eyes and caught a glimpse of the room now packed with students and Sir Thomas holding up a very large and formidable pair of scissors. Just as I was opening my mouth to yell I heard a voice say, "Look out, he's coming-to," and once more I passed out, eventually to awake without my adenoids and to return to my home. After that terrifying experience, a mere journey from Sussex to Berkshire was a picnic.

Mortimer was a very luxurious preparatory school for about fifty boys, though Mr. Cameron, an old Eton master and the tutor there of one of my uncles, was a firm believer in the birch. But the teaching was excellent. Nearly all the boys were destined for Eton, and the proportion of them who passed high in their entrance examinations to that college was large. I remained at Mortimer very happily till I was

just thirteen, when I, too, followed my elder brother to Eton in September 1895.

I took Remove, but had not been there more than a few days when my father suddenly died. He had been out shooting on the Saturday, and died in his sleep that night, presumably of heart failure. In a hundred ways a father is more indispensable to his sons when they are between the ages of ten and eighteen. All three of us were that age, and it was our first great tragedy.

It was the first blow also to the family fortunes. My father was earning a considerable income in the City, to which he used to go five and sometimes six days a week from Sedgwick. He left the house every morning at 8.30, drove himself to Horsham station about four miles away in a phaeton and pair, and then travelled by rail to London Bridge, returning home in the evening in the same manner at about 7 p.m.

My mother was a most capable and undaunted woman. A farm was sold, some of the timber cut, the shooting let, and my younger brother was sent on the grounds of economy to Radley instead of to Eton. Fortunately a few years later the Borneo Company, to the building up of which my father had devoted much of his energy, began to pay handsome dividends, so that we were able to carry on more or less on the old lines in other respects. But my mother, who was a tenacious and conservative property owner, never used to pass that farm without regretting its sale. Nevertheless, for us, as for the world in general, the outward semblance of stability remained. Water was flowing under the bridges, but it seemed to be a mere stagnant pool. Queen Victoria was shortly to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee and income-tax still stood at a few pence in the pound. It was the golden age for the "Haves," and any change in the fundamental order of things seemed very far away and almost unthinkable.

Dr. Warre was the imposing and very successful Head Master of Eton College, and Evelyn and I were at Charles Lowry's house. I remained at Eton till the summer of 1900. It is a commonplace to say that schooldays are the happiest time of life, but I do remember crying at my last school concert. I did not particularly shine at either play or work, but I won a few Division and minor school prizes, got my house colours and was a School's Fives choice, and would have been Second Captain of the Oppidans with a good chance

of other school colours if I had stayed another year, as I should normally have done.

Possibly the most memorable thing, so far as I was personally concerned, occurred during my first summer. The Lower Boys bathed in Cuckoo Weir, a backwater of the Thames. I could not swim when I went to Eton, and non-swimmers were supposed to remain in a shallow part, fenced off from the deeper water of the weir by what was called the "non-nant" pole, stretching right across the stream. One afternoon I saw a boy whom I knew standing in his depth some thirty yards away on the other side of that pole. I jumped to the conclusion that I could at any rate boldly walk as far as that without getting out of my depth. So under the pole I went, only after walking a few yards to plunge head over heels into a deep hole in the middle of the weir. My sensations at the time remain as vividly in my mind to-day as they were then. I made no attempt to cry out. I told myself that I had got into the mess by my own fault and must get out of it as best I could by myself. The beginning was extremely painful. I bobbed up and down, choking and filling up with water. When I was quite full—and I remember making a sort of gurgle as would be the case with a bottle in similar circumstances—all pain ceased and I stopped struggling. I turned on to my back and began gradually and slowly to sink. A boy in my own house saw me at that stage and thought that I was floating on my back. From that moment I was quite sure that I was going to die. I had no doubt whatsoever but that I would go to Heaven. I had no particular sins on my conscience. During the holidays before I went to Eton my sister had tried to teach me to play the piano, but had given it up in disgust as I was and am quite unmusical. I recalled this and was anxious about what would happen in Heaven if I never learnt to play the harp. I wondered if my family would be sorry. Then, when I was already a foot or so below the level of the water, I saw something just above me and clutched at it. All I got was a bang on the head, and I remembered no more till there was a roaring in my ears which got louder and louder and I found myself on the bank being held up by the heels and vomiting gallons of very dirty Thames water.

What had happened was as follows: a boy named Pigott had swum over me, and feeling his leg seized had thought that it was someone playing the fool and had given a kick and thought no more about it.



The result was to drive me down to the bottom in the middle of the weir. Gradually, thanks to the current, I drifted towards the bank. Another boy named Meredith happened to be diving for plates from the side. Fortunately for me, one of them sank near my body, and Meredith found what he thought was a corpse at the bottom. He shouted to the waterman who used to teach the boys to swim from a punt moored to the bank. The waterman undid his punt, poled to the spot, and hoisted my body to the top with his pole out of about six feet of water. I was as black as a crow, and it was, of course, never known how long I had been at the bottom of the river. But it must have taken a considerable time for me to drift from the middle to the side. The poor waterman, who after all had saved my life, was severely reprimanded by the Head Master and relegated elsewhere for not having jumped straight into the water, instead of wasting time in undoing his punt.

I had been so certain that I was going to die, that when I found myself still alive I remember wondering whether I had been spared for some purpose. Providence is so inscrutable that it may well have been for some link in a chain of which I am myself unaware. Otherwise I suppose that it was in order to help postpone at Munich the war which would otherwise have broken out in 1938 instead of 1939. Whether that purpose was good or bad for Britain and the Empire may well remain unsettled till the end of time. After two or three days, such is the vitality of the young, I was none the worse, and though I still get frightened when my head goes under water, I succeeded, thanks to a bribe of ten shillings from an uncle, in passing my swimming tests the next summer half. The only person who got any kudos out of the affair was my elder brother. He broke the news to my mother in a long letter describing the whole incident as having happened to another boy and ending up with the sentence "and the boy was Nevile." This was always afterwards quoted in the family as a monument of tact.

There was one other moment in my life when immediate death seemed to me to be quite inevitable. It was some forty years later, when I was Minister at Belgrade, and on that occasion my reaction was very different, I fear, and entirely worldly. It occurred in 1933, when I was at Bled, the summer residence of the British Legation. Princess Paul of Yugoslavia's two unmarried sisters (as they were at that time), Princess Elizabeth and Princess Marina (the latter now the Duchess of

Kent), were staying with her in her villa farther up the valley, and it was arranged one day to make an expedition to the Werthersee in Austria, which entailed crossing the Alps by one of the steeper passes. The party consisted of Oxley, Military Attaché, and his wife; Behrens, one of the British Legation secretaries; a member of the American Legation, and myself. The original plan was to travel in three cars, one of them being my own. At the last minute, however, my car developed engine trouble and we had to pack into the other two. Princess Olga's chauffeur was left behind and she drove herself. I sat beside Princess Olga, with Princess Elizabeth and Behrens in the back of the car. The rest of the party were in Oxley's car.

It was a beautiful day, and all went well till we reached the top of the pass and began to go down on the other side. Now, Princess Olga, though a good driver and (as she was to prove) possessed of marvellous nerve, had not had much driving experience, and instead of changing down to a lower gear remained in top gear and slid down the mountain with her foot pressed on the brake, with the result that before we reached the bottom of the pass the brakes were completely burnt out. Princess Olga suddenly realized this, and I, too, as we were going down a very steep incline with an almost right-angled bend at the end of it. At the bend itself there was no parapet and nothing to be seen but blank space with what looked like a sudden drop into the valley below. As the car gathered momentum instead of slowing down as it should have done, I heard Princess Olga give a little gasp of horror, but she kept her head and undoubtedly saved the lives of us all. Just before reaching the bend she switched off the engine and as we went over the roadside swung the car round on a slight slope that was there. By some miracle the car did not turn over—when we should have crashed a thousand feet to the bottom—but slithered at an acute angle through some brushwood till it bumped against a large rock and stopped about fifty yards below the edge. Except for Behrens, who was a bit bruised, none of us was even hurt, and I still regard it as due to the grace of God and Princess Olga's nerve that we survived. Indeed, the fall was so steep that when the Oxleys' car, which was following closely behind us, reached the spot, the others did not see us, and Princess Marina burst into tears, believing that we really had gone to the bottom. The whole affair was over in a few seconds, and when it flashed through my mind that we were

going to certain death my thoughts, alas! did not turn this time to heaven or to angels' harps. My only thought was that if one had to die one might die in worse company than that of a Royal Princess.

During my last year at Eton the Boer War broke out. For some unknown reason, always a mystery to me, I had been destined from earliest days to the Diplomatic Service. My own inclinations had always been for the Army, and the war rekindled my dormant but persistent desire for a military career. Up till then I was still under the standard of height required for the Eton Volunteers. In the enthusiasm of war that standard was lowered and I was at last able to join up. I pestered my mother to get me a nomination for the Army and I left the comfortable ease of what was known as First Hundred to join the Army Class.

But in the end the gods decided otherwise. I got nominations from the Dukes of Cambridge and of Connaught for the K.R.R.C. and Rifle Brigade, and I passed my Army examination from Eton into Sandhurst. But at the very moment at which I should have gone to Sandhurst for my medical examination my elder brother, who had gone out to South Africa with the Sussex Militia, went down with enteric at Johannesburg and was believed to be dying. My mother and sister ultimately went out to the Cape and brought him back alive, but the whole weight of family influence was brought to bear on me to abandon my plan of going into the Army. So I yielded at last with bad grace and much ill-temper, which brought on an attack of gout in my big toe! I did not, however, return to Eton, missing thereby what I have always thought would have been the best year of my life, but went instead to Dresden to study German for the Diplomatic Service. In those days four languages, or three and Latin, were obligatory, and I spent the next four years in Germany, France, and Italy, or at schools in London, cramming for my exam. At the first attempt I failed in French, though my total number of marks was more than several of those who succeeded. But I have never regretted that failure, as it compelled me to study that language, so useful in diplomacy, far more intensively than I would otherwise have done, and at the next examination, in April 1905, I passed out first in French; and in May of that year found myself at work in the Foreign Office.

## CHAPTER II

IT was the dawn of the twentieth century. Queen Victoria was dead, Edward VII was now King, and the epoch of British insularity was over. Under the pressure of great new political, national, and scientific forces, the face of the world which had seemed so stable throughout the nineteenth century was rapidly altering. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was preaching tariff reform and about the British Empire. Nearly everyone in Britain continued to be born either a little Liberal or a little Conservative; but not quite all, since the Labour or Socialist Party was taking form and Mr. Lloyd George had already made his famous series of "Limehouse" speeches. Lord Salisbury had gone, but the Cecils were still there, and the Conservatives were having their last fling for some time under the leadership of Mr. Balfour. Our centuries-old rivalry with France, after one last flare-up, had fizzled out at Fashoda, and in 1904 the new Anglo-French entente had come into being. The peace of Europe was being precariously preserved by means of the political concept of the balance of power, a triple alliance on one side and a triple entente on the other; but the menace of German aggression was beginning to rear its ugly head. The Napoleonic Wars and a rapidly falling birth-rate had sapped the strength and the vitality of France. She was still living on the memories of her past glories, but actually her place as the predominant power in Europe had already been taken by a lusty and aggressive Germany, united to a great but not final extent in Bismarck's Second Reich. Italy, too, had been united somewhat earlier, though, like Germany, not completely, and was similarly beginning to feel her new strength and to experience the stir of new ambitions. The old autocracy of Russia was, on the other hand, commencing to totter. Her uninterrupted progress eastwards had at last been halted by a vigorous new Japan with whom she was then at war, while the internal clamour for reform was growing insistent and gaining weight as the result of her military reverses in Manchuria. There was unrest in the Balkans and the state of the "sick man of Europe" was growing daily more precarious.

On the other side of the world the wealth and population of the U.S.A. were rapidly becoming more and more influential in world affairs. Europe was still the centre of the universe and oblivious of

the fact that her agelong undisputed position was being menaced both in the East and in the West. The water under the bridges was no longer stagnant but flowing. The old order was changing with a vengeance, though most of us were still either too blind or too obstinate to realize it. Wireless telegraphy was still unborn, electricity had come of age, and the petrol-driven car was a bouncing infant, though horses shied at it and the hansom-cab was still London's pride. People no longer regarded it as impossible that "little pigs should begin to fly," and on Christmas Day, 1902, the Wright brothers had succeeded in making their first epoch-making flight in an aeroplane over the sands at Daytona. It had covered a few hundred yards and had lasted for less than a minute, but it was a portent. All over the world, science was advancing with gigantic strides.

The Foreign Office, however, when I joined it in May 1905, was still very mid-Victorian. Lord Lansdowne, the author under the auspices of King Edward of the Anglo-French entente, was H.M. Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs; and the permanent Under-Secretary was Sir Thomas Sanderson, who had held that post for more than twenty years. Lord Lansdowne's Private Secretary, Sir Eric Barrington, through whom alone nominations to the reserved occupations of a Foreign Office clerkship or diplomacy could be obtained, had held his post almost equally long. It was a stronghold of that immensely valuable asset in life, tradition; and though reform, both to keep abreast of the spirit of the age and to increase efficiency in the new scientific era, was long overdue, the old Foreign Office was irreplaceable. To the last Queen Victoria would read no despatches from her Ambassadors and Ministers except in long-hand, and handwriting was still one of the subjects in the Foreign Office and diplomatic examinations in which it was necessary to get a certain fixed percentage of marks. After her death a few women typists, possibly half a dozen in 1905, had been introduced into the Foreign Office, but all the work of entering and registering documents, docketing them (i.e. folding them up and writing a brief précis of their contents on the outside), "blueing" telegrams (i.e. copying them out in special ink on a wax board and making an indefinite number of duplicate copies of them), and all other clerical work of that description was done by the clerks themselves.

It was a job hardly worthy of the high standard of education and

intelligence required of budding Foreign Office officials and diplomats, though possibly it had its good points as well as its bad. At any rate, it reduced the output of literature, much of it superfluous and jejune, which, thanks to stenographers, is nowadays poured out from the Office and its missions abroad in ever-increasing volumes. The modern clerk or secretary, by merely pressing a button, is furnished with a stenographer to whom he can dictate at his heart's content interminable screeds which someone else has to read. No wonder that the mass of paper and red tape and the size of our bureaucracies have increased ten or even a hundred times over in the last forty years. If they are not to strangle us, something will have to be done in the post-war reforms to check this alarming tendency.

On my arrival at the Foreign Office I was allotted to the American Department, over which Arthur Larcom presided with Charles Somers-Cocks as his second-in-command. My immediate superior and trainer of new boys was Lancelot Oliphant, afterwards H.M. Ambassador in Brussels, who was captured by the Germans in 1940 and thereafter, in spite of all diplomatic privileges, remained a prisoner of war for over a year. He was a master of detail and a most kindly and competent teacher, and I have a lifelong affection for him. He saved me from making my first big *lâche*.

In that summer of 1905 the principal American topic was Mr. Theodore Roosevelt's intervention in the Russo-Japanese War and the peace negotiations which were going forward at Portsmouth, U.S.A. I was "early boy" one morning when the Foreign Office bags from Washington arrived in London. It was my duty to open them, enter the despatches and docket them. Among the correspondence was an envelope addressed to the Marquess of Lansdowne (instead of to H.M. Principal Secretary of State) in the handwriting of Sir Mortimer Durand, our Ambassador to the U.S.A. I opened it, extracted therefrom a long memorandum, which I folded into the required shape and docketed. It gave the official account of the peace negotiations then in progress. The envelope I threw into the waste-paper basket. Half an hour later Lancelot arrived in the Department. He looked round the registry to see if I had been doing everything correctly, and luckily for me he finally sniffed round the waste-paper basket. There he noticed the envelope in Durand's handwriting, picked it out of the basket (apparently I should not have opened a letter addressed simply to the "Marquess

of Lansdowne" and without the official title of H.M.'s Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) and proceeded to draw out of it a long private letter from Durand, which I had failed to notice, giving a much more interesting and highly secret account of the negotiations. I got a lecture on my carelessness, and I had to erase my docket and replace the letter and the memorandum in their envelope and send it down to the Secretary of State with an apology for having opened it in error. But I have never since thrown away an envelope without first holding it up to the light.

The first duty of a newly joined official was to pay his respects to the Permanent Under-Secretary. Sir Thomas's opening comment was invariably in respect of your handwriting. He had made a habit of noting how you had been marked for that in your entrance examination. I remember that he told me that he was glad to see that I had a good handwriting. A decade or more later one of my chiefs, Lord Bertie, marked one of my drafts, which to the end of my time I always wrote in long-hand, as follows: "Mr. Henderson has by nature or training a good handwriting; he must not allow it to run riot." One's next contact with Sir Thomas was an invitation to dinner in his house in Upper Wimpole Street, where, a bachelor, he lived with two elderly maiden sisters. There his conversation would chiefly be about the late Lord Salisbury and the Berlin Congress of 1878. I only had the honour of dining with him once and was never in sight of another invitation.

London was very gay in those summers at the beginning of the century, and one was asked by hostesses, whom one hardly ever knew, to endless dances for débutantes. In addition supper at Romano's or Odennino's with ladies of the various theatre choruses was much in fashion. The Foreign Office had also started a polo club at Wembley Park in 1904. Thanks to a friend of mine in the office, I had been able to join it the year before I actually passed my exams. There were eight regular office members, and in 1904 we practised in Harry Rich's paddock; but by 1905 the full-length ground was in playing order. We rode Rich's hirelings at half a guinea a pony for two chukkas each. In order to get to our work at the Foreign Office in time, we started three times a week at between 7 and 8 a.m. When anybody failed, a guest was roped in to take his place. Winston Churchill played with us once or twice, as did General Maude, the hero of Mesopotamia, and many others from the Admiralty or War Office.

On the occasion on which I was asked to dinner at Sir Thomas's, it happened that I had been supping and dancing till 4 a.m. the night before, had played polo in the early morning, and had been working at the Foreign Office all day. After dinner I found myself on the sofa between the two Misses Sanderson and went fast asleep. I was justly never forgiven for this unpardonable breach of good manners.

In those days the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service were two distinct branches, and one joined and grew old in either one or the other. One could occasionally, temporarily or permanently, exchange by means of an individual arrangement or with official sanction; otherwise the diplomat spent all his life abroad, the sole condition being that his first year was spent at the Foreign Office learning his job. I had joined the Diplomatic Service, but in my case the general rule regarding a year in the Foreign Office was broken.

In November, after I had been but six months at the Foreign Office, the Embassy at St. Petersburg clamoured for additional staff, and I was ordered forthwith to proceed there. Except for a brief period of three months at the end of 1915, I never worked in the Foreign Office again. The two services are now one, and it is far better that it should be so. A man who lives abroad all his life becomes a stranger in his own country and loses touch with his own people and the personalities in it. The Foreign Office, moreover, has its own habits, methods, and idiosyncrasies, and it is better that H.M.'s representatives abroad should be familiar with them. Otherwise there is friction and misunderstanding and a mutual lack of sympathy which is prejudicial to the best possible results.

I have always regretted that I never came back to work at the Foreign Office for a spell of at least a year or two. I did try to once or twice, but somehow the plan never materialized. To all intents and purposes, and except for varying periods of leave—the longest of which was four months—I left England for good that December until I returned from Berlin in September 1939.



## CHAPTER III

**R**USSIA. That vast unpredictable country the mentality of which we in Britain and the West understand almost as little as we do that of the Japanese or the Chinese. How many people in this country realize that Russia covers over 8,000,000 square miles of territory, an area greater than the whole of North America, including Canada, the U.S., and Mexico, not to mention Alaska, Newfoundland, and Labrador; that of these 8,000,000 over 6,000,000 lie in Asia beyond the Urals and the Caucasus; that its population is anything between 180,000,000 and 190,000,000, over 50,000,000 of which live in Asia?

Nor has the history of the great Slav race any real connection, nor does it bear any real comparison, with that of western Europe. The Roman Empire hardly reached its fringes. It is true that much of its culture and all its religion came from Greece via Byzantium, but the tradition of the Crusades and the Middle Ages, the system of chivalry and feudalism, the love of military glory and the European conception of romance, had no part in the Slav's development. His environment was the limitless horizon, and he was by nature a nomad or a shepherd or a trader, whose only history till the seventeenth century was that of repeated invasions from the north by Vikings, who remained as rulers and overlords of an alien population (both the Rurik and the Romanoff families were of Swedish origin), or from the east by the Mongols of Genghis Khan or Tamerlane, who brought nothing and created nothing and left behind them nothing but an admixture of Tartar blood. It was not till Peter the Great opened his window on the west at St. Petersburg that Western influence began to play any really important part in Russian development. And since Germany was Russia's western neighbour, it was German influence, in spite of the traditional hatred between Teuton and Slav, which was predominant. The Russian nineteenth-century Empire comprised the Baltic States, the ruling class in which consisted largely of the German barons who had been left behind after the waves of Teutonic Knights' incursions eastward had been halted at Tannenberg in the fifteenth century. They played a large part in the government of Russia right up to the time when I went to St. Petersburg.

Count Lamsdorff was Minister for Foreign Affairs; Baron Freed-

ericks was Minister of the Court; the Benckendorffs and others held many of the higher posts in the administration; while the German Emperor and the Tsar had military plenipotentiaries attached to each other's person, maintaining personal contact quite independent of their diplomatic missions. Germans, or Russians of German origin, were generally the managers of big estates and the directors of most industrial concerns. The gradual elimination of this German influence was very noticeable between 1905 and the outbreak of the First World War. To the Russian Slav the words "foreign" and "German" were synonymous: *nemezki*. Many people in Britain would have had greater sympathy for Bolshevism or Leninism if they had realized the basic force behind the movement, and still more if the Communist Party in Russia had not tried to propagate its theories abroad, or if abroad extreme Left-wingers and a wordy intelligentsia had not sought to use Bolshevism as a stick with which to beat their own theoretical drums. It was not Marxian Communism but the revolt of a race against a system and a caste, both of which were alien to it.

I remember Mr. Lloyd George saying during the Peace Conference of 1919 that Bolshevism would end in extreme nationalism, and he was assuredly right. Germany might overrun Russia from Poland to the Urals, but, as Tolstoi says, it is not battles which decide the ultimate fate of nations. The spirit of the Slav will survive, as it always has survived, in spite of the Rurik autocracy or Mongol invasions. One cannot but believe that Germany will be fated one day, when the gods—who remember everlastingly and strike remorselessly—choose their moment, bitterly to regret the evil day when Hitler's Nazis chose wantonly to attack Russia and revive that savage latent hatred of the Slav for the Teuton. Just as the Napoleonic aggressions stimulated, no less than Frederick the Great and Bismarck, German nationalism, so will Hitler contribute, no less than Lenin and Stalin, to unify the Slavs and invigorate the Slav genius, which has so long been fettered by restraints of foreign origin alien to its true conception and natural gifts. The Japanese aggression on the Chinese is possibly having the same effect in countries still farther east.

But when I was first posted to Russia that December 1905, German influence was still predominant. The Russo-Japanese War had just been brought to a conclusion by the Treaty of Portsmouth, and the encouragement and support Britain had lent to Japan in the course of

the war was still a vivid memory. The British Embassy was to all intents and purposes ostracized. Its members were invited to no Russian houses, and when invited to diplomatic Embassies or Legations their hosts were careful to place them at table next to foreign colleagues and not to Russians. Only one Russian could not break off personal relations with the British Embassy, and that was Prince Serge Belosselsky. He was an enthusiastic polo player and had made a first-class ground on his property on the islands at Krestovery. He could never have made up a team without the co-operation of the British Secretaries. He was married to a charming American who had naturally no inhibitions, and Serge's possible resentments were weaker than his love for his favourite game. But for nearly two years even he could not enter the doors of the Yacht Club, the most exclusive club in St. Petersburg, lest he should have been challenged to a duel for his well-known friendship for Britons. Nor was the risk a negligible one. In matters of honour, duels were still tolerated, at any rate in military circles. There were two notable ones during my time, both on the Belosselsky polo-ground, and in both of which Serge himself was one of the seconds. In the first a certain Count Manteuffel (of the Garde à Cheval, or Horse Guards, of which Serge was a Colonel) killed Count Elston (of the Chevalier Garde, or Life Guards), son of Prince and Princess Yousupoff and elder brother of the Yousupoff who was later implicated in the murder of Rasputin; while in the second Prince Napoleon Murat (also of the Horse Guards) fought a double duel with two brothers, one of whom was an aide-de-camp of the Grand Duke Boris, and wounded them both, fortunately not fatally.

Murat was not unworthy of his name. A very gallant Frenchman, he had run up enormous debts in Paris, which the head of the family agreed to pay on condition that he left France. As his mother had been a Princess of Mingrelia in the Caucasus, he came to Russia, joined a Cossack regiment, and fought in the Russo-Japanese War. He was twice wounded, and after the war was attached to the Horse Guards. He was one of our polo players, a regular competitor in the annual horse show in St. Petersburg, a great favourite with everybody, but particularly the *demi-monde*, and a persistent gambler who somehow never seemed to win but never seemed depressed about losing. Poor Napol! He survived the First World War, and the last time I saw him was at Constantinople in 1921 or 1922, when he had at last got per-

mission from the Bolsheviks to leave Russia. He was desperately ill, and travelling fourth class in an impossibly dirty tramp steamer on his way back to the hospital of the Val de Grâce, near Paris. Count Chambrun, afterwards French Ambassador in Rome, who was then, as I was, Counsellor to his High Commissioner at Constantinople, went down to the port to see him for a few minutes on his passage through. Chambrun, like myself, had known Murat in those happier pre-war days, and it was a painful experience.

But to return to Russia in 1905. The Franco-Russian Alliance had been signed in 1891 and political relations between the two countries were intimate, but the French Ambassador, Bompard, was an unsympathetic personality. Throughout the whole of my career as a diplomat abroad it always seemed to me that the personality of the individual in foreign relationships was of infinitely greater importance than the skill of an Ambassador or a Minister in writing reports or despatches. Admittedly middle courses are best, and it is a mistake to go too far in any one direction. Those, however, who seek too much to write what their Foreign Offices or Governments like to read not infrequently do more harm than those who try too much to be *persona grata* in the country to which they are accredited.

In this particular case it is certain that the unsympathetic personality of Bompard did much to tighten the personal preference of the Russians for the Austrians and the Germans. It was not till Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 and was supported by Germany in doing so that the atmosphere in Russia began openly to change. The Austro-Hungarian Embassy in particular appeared, in 1905, to have been selected with special care. Aerenthal himself was Ambassador (the St. Petersburg post was a stepping-stone to higher appointments); the Counsellor was Prince Charles Furstenberg, with a charming and partly English wife, daughter of a great Hungarian nobleman, Count Festetics, and of his wife, herself a daughter of the Duke of Hamilton who had married a Mecklenburg duchess; the Military Attaché was Prince Gottfried Hohenlohe, who afterwards married an Austrian archduchess and was Austrian Ambassador in Berlin during the last war; while the Secretaries were all well off and social successes. The Austrian Embassy, where Count Berchtold shortly followed Aerenthal as Ambassador, and followed him again later as Austria's Foreign Minister, was consequently and deservedly by far the most

popular in Russian eyes of the foreign Missions. The German Embassy, where von Schoen was Ambassador, who also became in due course his country's Foreign Minister, was infinitely less so. My personal experience of German Missions abroad was the same everywhere. They were sociable enough, but were stiff and lacking in humour and good fellowship. On the other hand, the staffs of the Austro-Hungarian and British Missions were always the best of friends, and from the point of view of diplomatic amenity the extinction of one's colleagues of the old-time Austrian Embassies after the last war was a sad, if minor, tragedy.

Incidentally it might be mentioned that in 1905 Bavaria still had a separate Legation in St. Petersburg. The Minister was Count Moy and the Secretary a Schoen, who was the nephew of the German Ambassador. Countess Moy was a daughter of Prince Radolin, a Polish-German family originally Radolinski, and a cousin of Lord Tyrrell. She had Indian blood in her veins. Tall and dark, extremely good-looking and charming, her Indian extraction, of which she was proud, was very evident. As my Ambassadress once said of her, she walked as if she were carrying a pitcher on the top of her head.

Charles Hardinge, afterwards Lord Hardinge of Penshurst and Viceroy of India in 1914, was my first Ambassador, but only for a very brief period, as he had just been appointed to succeed Sir Thomas Sanderson as Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He initiated the long-overdue reform of the Foreign Office, and became the close adviser on foreign affairs of King Edward, whom he accompanied on all his visits abroad during those years of momentous change in foreign policy which followed on the death of Queen Victoria. Lady Hardinge had already left, and Sir Charles was merely waiting till he could present his letters of recall. Until the arrival of the new Ambassador, Sir Arthur Nicolson, afterwards Lord Carnock (who in his turn became Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs), Cecil Spring-Rice, the Counsellor, our Ambassador at Washington in 1914, was *Chargé d'Affaires*. Commonly known as Springy, no more lovable or brilliant or vague character ever existed. The First Secretary or head of the Chancery was Herman Norman. His competency and his industry were proverbial. I forget now whether it was for two or three years, but certainly two, during which he never missed coming to the office for a single day, Sundays included. He was

wrapped up in his work and never seemed to want a holiday. The two other Secretaries were Cranley and Errington. The latter taught me to typewrite and was my model for all wordy matters. Later, as Earl of Cromer, he became Equerry in Ordinary to the King, Assistant Private Secretary, and eventually Lord Chamberlain. An ideal setting for him, as he was a perfect courtier in every respect. Cranley, too, left the Service in due course. After succeeding his father as Earl of Onslow, he served with the B.E.F. in France in the last war, became interested in politics, was at one time Under-Secretary for War and for several years Paymaster-General.

In addition, the staff consisted of the Military and Naval Attachés, Colonel Guy Wyndham and Captain Victor Stanley; a Press Attaché, Captain Smith; a Commercial Attaché stationed in Moscow, and myself. There were no archivists and no typists. Everything except stamping and posting the letters, for which the Chancery servant was responsible, was done by the diplomatic secretaries themselves. Occasionally we were helped by so-called honorary attachés, or young men who served for a year or so abroad with a view to broadening their minds for some other future career—generally parliamentary. It was a very different state of affairs from that which prevailed when I left the Service. When I was Ambassador in Berlin the total number of the staff attached to the Embassy was nearer to a hundred than the ten or so of pre-war days. All the talk about secret diplomacy ceased to have any real meaning after the immense additions to the staffs of our Missions abroad which became the rule after 1914.

Secrecy was, however, a word which had some meaning in St. Petersburg in 1905. It took nine keys to get from outside the house to the last drawer in the safe in the Chancery. Nor were these precautions excessive. The Tsarist predecessors of the Bolshevik OGPU were exceedingly ingenious and we were being constantly spied upon. Two secret agents were actually caught in the Embassy shortly before my arrival. The first was a stranger, who was fortunately found by Sir Charles's English butler concealed behind the curtains of the Ambassador's study. The second was the Chancery servant, who was of Italian nationality. One day the door of the safe stuck and, as force was required, his assistance was called upon. He made some excuse to leave the room for a moment and his actions on his return aroused the suspicions of Henry Beaumont, then First Secretary. Beaumont

watched him till he put his hand on the top of the safe where its key had been laid. He then seized his wrist and turned his hand over. On the palm was a large piece of wax, by means of which he had intended to take an impression of the key. Thereafter we had an Englishman as Chancery servant. Up to the day I left I never knew whether his name was Avery or Havery. He may have been less efficient than the Italian, but he could be implicitly trusted.

Our spy-hunting efforts were a continual item of interest. We had a counter-spy who, if I remember rightly, was the photographer of the Russian Secret Service organization. Our dealings with him were conducted by Springy and Cranley, and he told them one day that if we looked at the decipherers of our telegrams, which were shut up in the archive presses, we would find pinholes in the four corners of some of them, where they had been stuck up on the wall and photographed. Nor was he wrong, and our preventive measures had to be redoubled. Yet we could not guard against everything, as the following incident shows.

In those days we sent a bag once a week to the Foreign Office, and one of the Secretaries in turn compiled a weekly summary of minor events which was included in the despatches. On bag days we all lunched upstairs with the Ambassador. On this occasion it was Cranley's turn, and he had just completed and typed his summary when we went to lunch, locking, as always, the double doors of the Chancery behind us. Cranley was very able and energetic and his were always the longest summaries. It comprised about forty pages of typescript and was left all ready for despatch on his desk. When we came down from lunch the doors were still locked, but the summary was gone. Springy and Rowland Errington sat up a good many nights in two cupboards just outside the Chancery door to try to catch these gate-crashers. But that produced no result, partly because Springy always had a cold in his head which made him constantly snuffle or sneeze, but chiefly, I fancy, because the Russian spy service was careful not to try to enter the building unless it was sure that all the Secretaries had left.

On one occasion Norman and I had been working rather later than usual, and as we left the Embassy, which formed the corner of a square, we saw two men who had been looking round the corner draw quickly back. We walked away as if we had noticed nothing, but having gone some distance we put up the collars of our *schoubas*,

or big fur coats, and came back to explore. We saw nothing and were, I fear, extremely amateurish, inasmuch as our counter-spy told Springy a week or so later that it was we who had been spotted and that that sort of trick was quite useless. I remember that he also gave Springy a useful hint in regard to one of his colleagues, the Swedish Minister. The Åland Islands and their fortification were, as always, a question of considerable interest to Russia. According to our counter-spy, if the Swedish Minister would look carefully at the box in which he kept his papers on his writing-table, he would find that one side had been very neatly cut out and then stuck back again in such a manner that with a little ingenuity it could always be removed at will, giving free access to the documents within. Springy of course informed Count Wrangel (later for many years Swedish Minister in London), who found that it was so.

All our letters which came through the ordinary post were of course opened and read. This had led, just before my time, to an amusing contretemps. Two of the staff at that time were engaged to be married, and both fiancées happened by a strange coincidence to write by the same mail enclosing photographic snapshots of themselves. The censor, presumably inadvertently, transposed them and each Secretary found the photo of the wrong girl in the letter addressed to him.

How much useful information the Russians actually acquired by these methods it is difficult to say, though it cost H.M. Government a certain amount of money in changing ciphers. Nor do I believe that the safe itself was ever violated. In any case, as the memories of our support for Japan in 1904-5 faded and we began, a year or so later, to initiate our own negotiations with Russia in respect of Persia, so did these spy efforts wane until they ceased to have any dangerous reality. But not before I had nearly succeeded in killing my Ambassador in mistake for a spy. The story has already been told in Harold Nicolson's *Life of his father, Lord Carnock*, but I prefer my own account of it, which in at least one respect is certainly more accurate than his.

Next to the Chancery, but forming part of the private apartments of the Embassy, was a bedroom called the Camelback Room. Springy used to sleep there when he was *Chargé d'Affaires*, to be nearer his work and for the sake of security against spies. When Sir Arthur Nicolson came it was used as a spare bedroom, and Harold, then at



Oxford, used to occupy it when he stayed with his father during the holidays. It was the winter of 1906, and Harold and I had been to the theatre to see a Russian version of Sherlock Holmes and had then gone to bed. About three in the morning I was awakened by Harold knocking at the door of my bedroom. I had become private secretary to the Ambassador and lived in a small apartment on the opposite side of the courtyard, round which the Embassy was built, to the private part of the house. The apartment communicated on one side, through some waiting-rooms, with the Chancery, and on the other with a passage leading to the Embassy servants' quarters. Just beyond the Chancery on the Ambassador's private side of the building was the Embassy main staircase. It was at the door leading to the servants' quarters that Harold came a-knocking on a very cold and dark winter's night. He told me that he had clearly heard someone moving about in the Chancery and opening up the archive presses. He was in a state of considerable excitement and asked me if I had got a revolver. When I left for Russia the year before I had been instructed by the Foreign Office to take a revolver with me, but up till then had never even loaded it. I did so, not without some difficulty, and put it in the pocket of my dressing-gown, where fortunately I forgot all about it. In my excitement, which was not less than Harold's, I also fortunately forgot a small rubber truncheon which the Japanese Ambassador had given to Springy for just such an emergency, and which Springy had left behind with me when he went to Persia.

We then proceeded to advance towards the zone of danger. Being bigger as well as older than Harold, I led the way, on bare feet in my case, opening each door very quietly and moving stealthily on to the next. After passing through two or three rooms in this manner I suddenly, in the faint light thrown by a window on the courtyard, glimpsed in the middle of the next the shadow of an outline of a man. I believe that I *did* say, "You devil, I've got you"; but I certainly did not say it in French, as Harold relates. I was far too agitated to speak in any language but English. Happily I was too excited even to use my fist. My only idea was, I think, to seize the man by the throat. Anyway, I shot out my open hand and caught the shadow in the middle of the chest. In those days I weighed over thirteen stone, and the man went flying across the room and crashed in a corner of it. I can still remember the exultation with which I groped after him in the dark until I

did at last get my fingers on his throat. I was just beginning to squeeze it when I heard a faint voice coming out of the blackness, which said, "Look out, it's only me." It was Sir Arthur, and I also remember the reaction which I experienced when I realized it. My knees literally knocked together, a phenomenon which I had always regarded until then as imaginary, like one's hair standing upright on one's head; and it was with immense relief that I heard him faintly add, "Never mind me, you go on." So on I went, this time alone, as Harold remained behind to succour his father. What had happened had banished all fear from my mind, and I was bitterly disappointed at finding nobody at all in the Chancery. I think at that moment I was ready for half a dozen spies.

It was only later that I discovered that Harold had awakened his father first. The gallant Sir Arthur had said that he would wait at the top of the stairs and trip anyone up if I missed him, and had sent Harold round the back way, via the servants' quarters, to fetch me. The latter had taken a considerable time to find his way, and Sir Arthur had lost patience and started off the more direct way through the danger zone to find me. We met half-way. Luckily, after two or three days in bed the Ambassador was none the worse. He was to have dined with one of the Grand Dukes the next night, and in writing to excuse himself he said that he had had an accident owing to one of his Secretaries trying to get quick promotion. There was no more spy stuff after that.

## CHAPTER IV

THE fact nevertheless remains that in the midst of all the new material and scientific discoveries and in view of the world's rapidly increasing tempo, Russia could no longer remain backward. The water was flowing faster under her bridges also, and a revolution of some sort seemed inevitable to all of us even in those days. I remember writing a despatch to the effect that a successful war might save the dynasty and being admonished by O'Beirne, who said that nothing could. For the great mass of those teeming millions the opening of the twentieth century was a sort of end of the Middle Ages. To say that Russia was 90 per cent. illiterate would probably be an understatement.

With such a small staff as that of an Embassy in pre-war days, our work was so unrelenting that we seldom had an opportunity to travel in the country, an omission which I never ceased to regret. Part of the diplomat's job is to see as much as he can of the country in which he has been posted and to get into touch with as many classes of individuals as he can. Later, when I was myself head of a Mission, I encouraged my staffs to take as much local leave as possible. But in Russia, apart from the heavy work, the distances were so great that local leave was practically useless. I did manage to get away for a day or so now and again, generally to shoot a bear or something of that sort, and twice I was able to go away for a week to Volhynia in the Ukraine to stay with the Joseph Potockis at Antoniny. Count Potocki was a Russian Pole, and he and his brother Roman, an Austrian subject, had married two sisters of the great Polish family of Radziwill. Both had immense estates (Roman at Landshut) and rivalled each other in the magnificence of their establishments. I never had the good fortune to be able to go to Landshut, but I shall never forget, in particular, my first visit to Antoniny, where I went in the autumn of 1907 with Sir Arthur Nicolson. It was a long day-and-night's journey by train and about eighty kilometres to drive from the station. There were no motor-cars in Russia in those days, though St. Petersburg had its first motor exhibition in that year.

I have two memories of that exhibition. Among the exhibits was a red London omnibus, and on the last day Russian Society made up

a party to go for a drive on it through the streets of the capital. I remember well driving up the quays by the Neva and the Grand Duke and Duchess Wladimir standing on the balcony of their palace to see the novel sight. What the ordinary man in the street thought can be imagined. The second recollection is of a remark made to me by the head of the German Delegation, a certain Count Sierstorff. The excellent Benz, Opel, and Mercédès makes were the chief German exhibits. Sierstorff said, "It is an extraordinary thing—you British have easily the best car in the world, the Rolls-Royce, and yet all your other makes are utterly inferior." That was thirty-four years ago, and while we have remedied the latter reproach, the Rolls has been, and still is, the best car in the world. A great achievement!

But to return to Antoniny. The fifty miles or so from the station had to be covered in horse-carriages, with a relay half-way. That in itself was a considerable trip in those days, and I recollect two points of interest in connection with it. The first was that we never went up hill without first going down hill. The reason for this was that the country, while looking quite level, contained a series of deep depressions—holes in fact instead of hills. It grew mostly sugar-beet, which brought in a fabulous revenue for the proprietor. Joseph Potocki was notorious for having lost some two million Austrian shillings (between £80,000 and £100,000) at a single game of cards, *chouette écarté*, at one sitting, in the Jockey Club at Vienna. It was on a Saturday night and the debt was paid on the Monday. It was an unlucky week for him, as he went off the next day on a wild-boar hunt in Poland, where his father-in-law shot him in the thigh by accident. One leg remained shorter than the other and he limped all his life as the result; but his £100,000 meant merely a temporary inconvenience.

The other interesting point in connection with that journey by road to Antoniny was that throughout its whole course one never passed a single two-storied house till one suddenly turned a corner in the road and saw before one a palace not unlike Versailles in size and splendour. There was nothing else in the whole area, unless it was a building belonging to and built by the landlord himself, but single-storied peasant cottages. It was typical of the complete lack of any middle class in Russia.

The return journey was still more fantastic. It was latish autumn and there was a heavy fall of snow for twenty-four hours before we

left. Instead of carriages we had to drive in sleighs. All the guests left at the same time—about midnight—to catch the only train per day back to St. Petersburg. It was a dark night, though the sky was clear and full of stars. The first sleigh had two horses and was empty, but on each side of the driver was a flaming torch to show the road. The next was a *troika*, that is to say with three horses, the middle one trotting and the two on each side cantering all the time. In it was the Ambassador, as the principal guest, and myself. Behind us was another two-horse sleigh with torches. After that another *troika* with more guests, then another torch sleigh, and so on down to the servants and the luggage. Altogether it needed ninety-five horses and about thirty-eight sleighs to get us all away. And in a great courtyard half-way to the station we changed them for another ninety-five, and it was all done in about five minutes. Every horse in the *troikas* had bells attached to its harness, and it was to their music and the beating of hooves and an occasional cry of encouragement to the horses from their drivers that we sped so smoothly over the snow in that dark but otherwise peaceful night, lit by the stars overhead and the flaming torches below. It was a bewitching and unforgettable experience which seemed to take one back hundreds of years.

Everything at Antoniny itself was on a similarly grand scale. There was a houseband which played at meal-times or for dancing after dinner; there were over a hundred English hunters in the stables in the charge of an Austrian riding-master. One went down there in the evening and selected the two one would ride the next day. There were three studs—one of pure Russian, one of Arab, and one of English thoroughbreds. There were two packs of hounds—one for stag and one for hare or fox; one with the hunt servants in red and one with them in green. Some fifty or sixty miles away was a vast enclosed territory of forest many square miles in extent, called Schepetovka, containing every animal, except beasts of prey, which could live in Europe, from the aurochs or European bison to the roe deer and the rabbit. The house was vast, the furniture all Louis XV or XVI, and the number of servants unimaginable. My chief had a big suite assigned to him. He was very regular in his habits, and on the second day he asked me whether I could arrange with our charming and attractive hostess to dispense with the servant whom he always found waiting for him at a particular apartment after breakfast. He said he had tried several, but at each one he

had found a guard, who apparently wanted to do everything for him except actually pull the chain. Sir Arthur said plaintively that it put him completely off his stroke. Poor Antoniny. It survived the last war after being used as H.Q. without distinction by Russian and Austrian generals alike. But when the revolution came it was utterly and completely destroyed, Schepetovka as well as the Palace, by the Bolsheviks. Such estates may be anachronisms, but why destroy their beauty?

One of the disadvantages of pre-war Russia was the expense of living. The rouble only went as far as a shilling and was worth two. An attaché, as I was, got no pay at all for two years, and when he automatically became a Third Secretary at the end of that period his salary was only £150. One could supplement this by passing an examination in International Law, for which one received an extra £100 a year so long as one was a Third Secretary, or in some countries, such as Russia, still another £100 for knowledge of the language just so long as one remained in that country. I passed the first but never the second, though I acquired by practice a sufficient knowledge of Russian to enable me to travel anywhere in comfort and make myself understood. I found even that little quite useful when I went much later to Yugoslavia.

Serbo-Croatian is practically the same language as Russian, though not quite so akin as Bulgarian, which is almost identical. A Russian going to Sofia could converse freely with a Bulgarian in twenty-four hours, but would need a couple of months to do the same in Serbia. When I was in Yugoslavia I travelled all over the country, and whenever I could I used to speak to the peasants in my sort of Russian jargon. When they heard that I was British, on more than one occasion they expressed surprise, saying that they had imagined I was a Czech. They realized that I was talking some sort of a Slav dialect, and guessed it was Czech as that was the one they knew least.

One of the conditions obligatory on a candidate for the Diplomatic Service was a guarantee of a personal income of £400 a year. I could never have lived in St. Petersburg on that, and before I left London I had got a promise from the Private Secretary that, when my time in Russia was up, I would be sent to some cheaper post where I could recuperate. I mentioned Tokio, Teheran, or Tangier, as easy to remember since they all began with a T. My mother, however, made

my allowance up to £600, yet even so I would soon have been completely broke if Sir Arthur had not appointed me his private secretary, for which he gave me £60 a year as well as a small apartment in the Embassy and all my meals except dinner. "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," for as it happened during those three years or so of my first appointment to Russia I was extraordinarily lucky at cards, almost entirely bridge. *La veine du petit anglais* (youth, not size, was meant) was almost proverbial, and I made a steady income out of my bridge winnings. It happened very seldom that I had to pay out anything on Mondays at the Yacht Club. Thus in the end I was able to keep three polo ponies and keep my end up with the far more affluent Austrians and other Secretaries. Once the revolutionary scare and the Japanese War of 1905 were past and over, life reverted almost to normal in St. Petersburg and was very friendly and pleasant. But the storm-clouds over Europe were gathering and peace soon became precarious again.

## CHAPTER V

IT was an interesting epoch in Russian history. The disasters of the Japanese War had greatly stimulated the growing demand for internal reform and for a more constitutional and democratic government. The shadow of revolution was already cast over that illiterate and backward land. In fact it was more than a shadow. The barricades were up that December (1905) and there was fighting which lasted for several days in the streets of Moscow. The workmen were striking also in St. Petersburg, and the Nihilists, as they were still called, were busy. It was no uncommon thing to hear a bomb explosion at any time in the day. Almost my first impression of the capital was the Nevski Prospekt lit up after nightfall by searchlights from the Admiralty, with savage-looking Cossacks riding up and down just outside their beams and armed to the teeth with carbines and knouts. For the troops on the whole remained loyal to the Tsar and the Cossacks in particular could be trusted.

The year 1905 was, in fact, the prelude to 1917, when once again it was military disasters which gave revolution its opportunity. But the rising temper of the people had induced the well-intentioned Emperor to make concessions. There was much resemblance between him and his Empress and Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, and one felt it even at that time, as will be told later. He had agreed to the summoning of a Parliament, and the Press was full of talk of the new Duma and the Zemstvos. As a colleague of an associated Power said to one of our Secretaries in the midst of it all, "Who is this fellow Zemstvo the papers are writing such a lot about?" The Zemstvos were, in fact, a kind of land council electorate, and in January 1906 the whole Diplomatic Corps attended the opening of the first Duma in the old Potemkin Palace. Its only act on that occasion was the election of its President, and I remember being exceedingly bored by hearing the name of Mouromtsoff read out again and again at the opening of each ballot paper. His election as President was practically unanimous. But it was an interesting spectacle to look at the various types elected from all the corners of the vast Russian Empire, Slavs of all descriptions, Balts and Finns, White Russians and Tartars, Caucasians and Turcomans, an infinite diversity.



Even at that time it would have needed but a little push and a really competent leader to have toppled over the edifice of Tsardom. It happened, however, that it was autocracy and not revolution which found the strong man in the person of Stolypin. Once he became Prime Minister early in 1906, the agitation gradually died down in face of the severity of his rule and the firmness of his administration. Sporadic bomb-throwing continued and in one case nearly cost Stolypin his life. But he happened to be out in his garden when the bomb exploded in his study, demolishing the house and blowing off the leg of his daughter. He himself, however, escaped, and though plots against the life of the Tsar and his only son and heir-apparent were the constant order of the day, they were frustrated by the unceasing vigilance of Stolypin's police. In the end it was Stolypin himself who was murdered in 1910 at Kieff, some say at the instigation of those who were jealous of his power. If he had survived—and he was a comparatively young man, tall, silent, and black bearded—the history of Russia might have taken a different course.

But in December 1905 the revolutionary excitement was still seething, and one of my earliest experiences was in connection therewith. One of the chief restaurants in St. Petersburg was the Medvied (i.e. Bear), where for a rouble (approximately two shillings) one could eat as much as one liked of the famous Russian *zakouski*, or hors-d'œuvre, heaped in endless variety on a table almost as long as the Shanghai bar. Vodka only was extra. On December 31st, 1905, a party of us went there to dine and to see the New Year in. At midnight the Russian National Anthem was played, not once but a dozen times over, on the insistence of those who wished to display their loyalty. But that loyalty was far from being unanimous, and at a table a few yards off from where we were sitting was a student in a green uniform who objected to having to stand up each time the anthem was played. At the next table to him was a reserve officer, Davydoff, who, noticing that the student remained seated, came up to him and ordered him to stand. He did so reluctantly, and may in fact have been too drunk to do so. Anyway, he knelt on the chair, whereupon Davydoff came up again and pulled it away from under him. Nothing happened at the moment, but about 3 a.m., when everybody had become still more intoxicated, the student apparently referred to Davydoff in abusive terms and loud enough to be overheard. Leaping to his feet, the latter

drew a revolver and saying something to the effect "You would call me the son of a something, you blank blank little traitor," emptied the eight bullets of a Browning into his body.

There was so much noise and so many crackers were going off that at first most people in the restaurant did not realize what had happened. But as soon as they did, there was general commotion. Some took sides with the student and some with Davydoff. Someone hit Davydoff over the head with a champagne bottle, and he, too, was covered with blood when he was pushed out of the restaurant by someone else by means of a chair held upside-down. For nearly half an hour the two parties conducted a violent discussion with the dead body lying between them. Nobody seemed to pay any attention to the corpse, so in the end I got up and knelt down to undo the student's tunic and to see if anything could be done. He was, however, quite dead, and I have still got somewhere one of the bullets which had gone right through his body and was sticking out of his back. While I was doing this nobody paid any attention to me either, but they continued to shout at each other over the heads of the dead student and myself, while a very large balloon floated in the air just above us both. It happened, however, that owing to the non-arrival of some of my luggage I had been obliged to wear that night a dark-blue braided double-breasted smoking-coat, such as were then the fashion, instead of the ordinary dinner-jacket. As I was still bending over the body, a well-dressed man knelt down beside me and said to me in French, "I do like the style of that coat you are wearing. Could you give me the name of the tailor from whom you bought it?" It was all very typically Russian.

After I had got up, people began to think about the corpse again and laid their napkins over it till it was covered from sight. Finally, about an hour after the shooting, the police came in and carried it away in a table-cloth. After that everybody sat down and began drinking again.

But, as has been mentioned earlier, when Witte was made a Count and was succeeded by Stolypin, the effect of the firm rule of the latter became at once apparent, and life in St. Petersburg on the surface soon resumed its normal course. Nevertheless, it was never to be the same as before. For one thing the Emperor never came back to live in the big Winter Palace on the quay opposite the fortress of St. Peter and

St. Paul. The last court ball had been given there in January 1904, on the very day that the Japanese, without declaring war, sank the *Petrpaulovsk* and drowned among others that great Russian war painter Verestchagin. The news reached the Emperor just before the arrival of the Japanese Ambassador, who was in ignorance of what had happened. When he came up to pay his respects, Nicholas II turned his back on him and the Ambassador quickly walked out again, asked for his papers and left the next morning.

Later came the massacre of the unarmed people, led by the mysterious Father Gapon on the great square opposite the Palace, and the emergence of the revolutionary spectre. Terrified for the life of her only son, the Empress refused to live in St. Petersburg, and all the time that I was there the Imperial residence was either at Tsarskoe Zelo, Oranienbaum, or Strelna, which could be more easily guarded. So the Emperor lost touch with his people. He came up for the day to his capital each January 1st, when he received the Diplomatic Body as a whole, or on special occasions such as the Blessing of the Waters (of the Neva); but so far as I know he never slept again in his capital till after 1914. To some extent his place in the capital itself was taken by his uncle, the Grand Duke Wladimir, the grandfather of the Duchess of Kent. But the Tsar was ceasing to be the Little Father of his people, and blind loyalty to the Throne began from that time to wither. The Cadet or Liberal intelligentsia party in Russia did what it could to keep constitutional government alive, but that too wilted under the iron heel of Stolypin, till the Duma scarcely existed except in name.

The Slav easily forgets, and the memories of the Japanese War were soon forgotten, as was Russian animosity against Britain. Sir Arthur Nicolson arrived as Ambassador in May with a Mission to improve Anglo-Russian relations by means of an agreement in respect of Persia, where our rivalry was to be eliminated by means of a clear definition of our respective spheres of interest; roughly the north for Russia and the south for Britain.

Springy had become Sir Cecil and had gone off as H.M. Minister at Teheran. He was succeeded as Counsellor by another very brilliant Irishman, Hugh O'Beirne. Very able and extremely good company, he was immensely popular in all circles in St. Petersburg, where he remained for nine years, an almost unprecedented period as Counsellor, but his presence there was, if anyone's can be, indispensable.

I had an immense admiration and liking for him and had always hoped to serve under him when he became an Ambassador. In 1915 he was at last transferred from Russia to Sofia as Minister, in a forlorn attempt to keep the Bulgarians from toppling over the fence on to the wrong side in the last war. But it was too late, and his mission there, as mine to Berlin in 1937, was a failure, possibly for the same reason. Bulgaria joined the Central Powers and O'Beirne returned to London and in 1916 was attached to Lord Kitchener's Mission to Russia. He was drowned in the *Hampshire* with the others, and his death was a great loss for the British Diplomatic Service. He had a faithful German Balt servant, who accompanied him to England. When the Mission was leaving London to embark on the *Hampshire*, O'Beirne went to the wrong station and only caught the ship with a few minutes to spare by means of a special train. Such is fate.

By the autumn of 1906 all was forgiven and forgotten by the easy-going Russians. The British Embassy was once more taken back into favour, and O'Beirne and I joined the Yacht Club, which none of us had been able to do for over two years. The Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna, wife of the Grand Duke Wladimir, was one of the first to hold out the hand of reconciliation. The Grand Duke liked a game of bridge in the evenings and O'Beirne was a good player. So he and I, since I also played, were invited together about once every ten days to go there to dine and play bridge.

One of the social laws of St. Petersburg was that, whereas it was normal to kiss every lady's hand on meeting her, it was not obligatory except in the case of a Grand Duchess. The kissing of hands has never been an accomplishment of the ordinary Englishman. It was certainly a novelty to me and I was extremely clumsy about it. Instead of raising the lady's hand to one's lips, I used to bend down till I bumped my nose against the back of it. This was regarded by the Russian ladies as a huge joke, and when I entered the room all the other guests and the household used to form up in two rows up which I had to walk with the Grand Duchess and loud laughter at the end of it. I was only twenty-three and very self-conscious, and the treatment I got in St. Petersburg did a lot to cure me of that failing. I have always been grateful for it. Another thing which the Russian ladies discovered was that I used to blush very easily if the talk became at all ribald. The result was that whenever I came into a drawing-room the conversa-

tion was switched from politics or the weather to something obscene, with the inevitable result. It did not take me long, however, both to learn how to kiss a lady's hand and to listen unblushingly to anything.

Social life was very pleasant but very tiring. The climate of St. Petersburg was abominable, and life only began when the curtains were drawn and the lights were on. Unless one happened to be asked to dinner, one went to a party at midnight and it usually lasted till three or four in the morning, often till much later. It was quite usual when a party broke up for half a dozen ladies and double that number of men to go off to a restaurant, have the band up in a private room and dance till six or seven in the morning. There were the gipsies also to listen to in a quarter of the town called Samarcand. It is not to be wondered at that the ladies never appeared before lunch-time, and when the season ended after Easter that they trooped away to Bad Kissingen or Baden-Baden or some French resort to recover from their fatigues. But there was no such respite for the diplomat. The work at the Embassy at St. Petersburg was hard and incessant. I had to be in the Chancery at 9.30 a.m., and often worked till 8 p.m. Luckily one was young, but I never touched thirteen stone again. I remember one week in which I went to bed only once in six days, and that was after a ball which had lasted till 4 a.m. I was in love at the time and things were not going at all well in my opinion, otherwise despite my age I should not have been quite so foolish.

St. Petersburg society was unusually small, and even on a big occasion scarcely exceeded between three and four hundred persons in all. There were really only two sets in it, a musical one which clustered round the Grand Duchess Constantine, and a, so to speak, worldly one, of which the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna was the head. The real leaders of the latter were two sisters-in-law, Princesses Susie Belosselsky and Olga Orloff, who in a sense were jealous rivals but at the same time indispensable to each other. It was very unlike London or Paris, where there are dozens of sets.

In St. Petersburg one met everybody in one's particular crowd every night. Thus one got to know people really well, and nothing could have been nicer and more hospitable and more easy-going than Russian society. Of all the people I have ever met they were the least snobbish. If they liked you, they liked you, and that was that. The question of money or antecedents never entered into their calculations.

In many ways, in spite of autocracy, they were, too, the most democratic people in the world. But the whole system was top-heavy. There was scarcely any middle class—a Russian was either a great nobleman or a humble peasant. And there were very few of the former and millions and millions of the latter.

The size of some of the properties was fantastic and unbelievable. Up to the eighteen-sixties, the middle of the Victorian era, the mass of the Russians were still serfs, i.e. the complete property of their owners. When emancipation was introduced by Alexander II, the noblemen were compensated for the loss of dependants, who were the absolute property of their masters, could be sold as soldiers or to other masters, and could not leave a village without the authority of the Prince. The largest of all the landed proprietors in respect of population was the head of the Sheremetieff family. He had to be-compensated for the loss of between two and three million souls. That is scarcely eighty years ago. Is it to be wondered that the Russians in the mass were politically undeveloped and educationally illiterate right up to 1917? Bolshevism has been terribly cruel, but it was an experience which centuries of despotism made inevitable in a people so backward as the Slav. Russia has got to work out her own salvation in conformity with the character, temperament, and history of the Slav nations. She has a long furrow to plough yet, and no one wishes her more good than I do. I never liked either Bolshevism or Nazism, though I could see good points in both. But of the two I infinitely preferred Bolshevism. Though it might seek to propagate its ideology abroad, it did not lay claim to racial superiority or look to aggression to achieve its purposes. But it is absurd to try to graft Slav systems and methods and ideologies on to other democracies, which are the outcome of other centuries of quite different character, temperament, and history. One can learn from others and adapt, but where the basis and development are quite different, as they are in Britain, it would be as foolish as it would be humiliating for a people whose Magna Charta goes back to the thirteenth century to accept the teachings of Marx or of Lenin as suitable, *en bloc*, for British consumption.

## CHAPTER VI

THE Balkan Question was at that time the main preoccupation of the European Chancelleries. The old Turkish Empire, the remains of the Ottoman conquests of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, was slowly tottering to its fall. It would not have survived so long as it did if it had not been for the rival ambitions of its various neighbours. Austria and Russia had both staked their claims among the ruins when it did fall. Germany, too, meant to have her share of the plunder and was planning to achieve preliminary economic penetration by means of the Berlin-Bagdad Railway. Nor did Italy intend to be left out of it but was already coveting a foothold in Albania and dreaming of a *mare nostrum* in the Adriatic. What none of these Powers seemed to take into consideration were the wishes of the Balkan peoples themselves. Yet in the Balkans also the spirit of nationalism, which the Napoleonic wars had done so much to foster, was beginning to assert itself. Serbia and Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece were doing more than dream of national unity and the overthrow of the alien despotism which had so long oppressed their fellow-citizens under Turkish rule. It needed but a spark to set the Balkans, the powder-magazine of Europe as it was then called, ablaze.

Actually the match was lit in Constantinople itself, with a fuse which ran first up to Bosnia and Herzegovina and then back to Belgrade, Sofia, and Athens. The tyranny and corrupt administration of Abdul Hamid produced the Young Turk Movement, the revolution of 1907, the deposition of the Sultan, and the establishment of a constitution in Constantinople. Apprehensive of the effect which this might produce among the Balkan races, Austria determined to make sure of her share of the Turkish bearskin and promptly declared the annexation in full sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nominally still part of the Turkish Empire, these provinces had been administered by Austria since 1879 under a provision of the Berlin Congress. Nevertheless, their unilateral annexation by Austria constituted the first act leading up to the World War of 1914 and to the dissolution in its turn of that old Austro-Hungarian Empire of which the diplomatists of the past had said that if it did not exist it would have to be created. It was not the first, nor will it be the last, time that a diplo-

matic victory (for Aerenthal's coup was undoubtedly such) was to prove a Pyrrhic one.

Now, the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina were Yugoslavs of Serbian or Croatian stock, though largely Moslem by religion. The Serbs had always regarded these provinces as part of their national inheritance and as their outlet to the sea. Their disillusionment when Austria quietly annexed them was cruel and intense, and in their disappointment they turned to Russia, the traditional protector of the Balkan Slavs, for help. The Panslavists in Russia were no less furious than the Serbs. Panslav demonstrations were organized in St. Petersburg and elsewhere, and diplomatic relations with the Austrian Government became strained almost to breaking-point. But Germany, in "shining armour" and with "mailed fist and rattling sabre," intervened on the side of her ally of the Triple Alliance, and in the face of a German ultimatum Russia was compelled to yield. The annexation was resentfully recognized, but the teams were now and henceforth definitely aligned for the future World War, with France and Russia on the one side and Austria and Germany on the other, with Britain and Italy respectively as doubtful starters. The Serbs were told to be patient, but there the fire of hostility to Austria could only be damped down and it continued to smoulder vigorously till August 1914.

It was at this stage in the European drama, early in 1909, that I was transferred from St. Petersburg. In spite of all my good fortune at cards and being able to live rent-free in the Embassy, my financial position was becoming increasingly embarrassing, and when the Young Turk revolution broke out in Constantinople I had asked to be sent there. Though Eric Barrington had ceased to be Private Secretary, a record had apparently been kept of what I had said to him, for the answer I received was that three years before I had expressed a preference for Tokio, Tangier, or Teheran, and that it was to Teheran that I should go. For some service reason or other this decision was cancelled a month or two later, and in the spring of 1909 I was appointed as Third Secretary to Tokio. I was very sorry to leave Russia, where I had made so many good friends and had been most kindly treated. But I wanted to see the world, and the Far East particularly. Every diplomat was supposed to go sooner or later to some distant post, and I felt that it would be as well to go far afield



when one was still young, so as later to be able if possible to stay nearer home. Yet I was sad at leaving, and was inspired by my feelings to one of the few bits of verse (I would hardly call it poetry) which I ever wrote.

I had left St. Petersburg in April, and after a holiday of some six weeks I started for Tokio in May. The day before I left London I had two wisdom teeth extracted. The dentist had told me that he was afraid that in the time during which I would be under the effect of laughing gas he would only be able to extract one of them. I begged him, in view of my departure the next day, to try to rid me of both of them. It was touch and go, but from his point of view he just failed, though from mine he succeeded. I came to just as he was drawing the second out of my mouth and I bit his thumb to the bone. When I recovered my senses he was bleeding and swearing equally profusely, and I have always felt that my involuntary act was a poor return for his kindness in successfully ridding me of both nuisances.

There were three available routes to Japan—by land via the Siberian Railway, by sea via the Suez Canal and India, or by sea and land across the Atlantic, North America, and the Pacific. I decided upon the third, largely because I had made great friends in Russia with the family of the American Ambassador, George von Lengerke Meyer. He had left St. Petersburg on being appointed Secretary to the Navy in Mr. Theodore Roosevelt's administration, and on hearing that I was going to Japan Mrs. Meyer had invited me to stop *en route* with them at their country home at Hamilton, Massachusetts. I never actually went there, as when I was in mid-Atlantic on board the old *Mauretania* I received a radiogram from Mrs. Meyer from on board another ship saying that she had had to leave suddenly for Europe, where one of her daughters was dangerously ill. It was the very early days of wireless and I felt quite important at receiving it. Crippen when on his way to Canada had been arrested shortly before by means of wireless, and I wondered if the other passengers, on hearing the steward pass along the deck calling out "Radio cable for Nevile Henderson," would think that I was a detective from the C.I.D.

I spent two or three days in New York, where I stayed at the old Holland House. It was pulled down shortly after, and what I remember best about it was the dial in one's room with every conceivable

requirement marked on it, from boots cleaned to iced water or a Manhattan cocktail. All one had to do was to turn the indicator to what one wanted, press the button, and hope for the best. I have a vague recollection of doing a deal of hoping for the best without much result. Skyscrapers were only just beginning their career upwards, and my chief impression of New York was hustle. I was a fast walker in my youth, and elsewhere when walking down a street I used always to be passing others. But in Broadway for the first time in my life it was I who was being passed all the time. The price of taxis was prohibitive, beginning as they did at seventy-five cents or about three shillings, so I explored chiefly by tram, and there I was pleasantly surprised (for I had been misinformed) by the civility of conductors and others of whom I used to ask the way.

I was much struck also by American hospitality. Though I was in New York so short a time I was made an honorary member of the Knickerbocker Club, spent a night at New Rochelle with Mrs. Polly Isling, a sister of Susie Belosselsky's, and need not have been a minute alone if I had attempted to use the vast packet of introductions which Mrs. Meyer had left at my hotel for me. My last night I was invited to dine with a banker, and endeavoured to excuse myself by saying that I had to leave for Niagara by a train starting shortly after 11 p.m. My host insisted that, if I would pack everything beforehand, there would be lots of time, so I went to the dinner. As soon as it was over I said that I must return to my hotel. "That," my host said, "is quite unnecessary. I have sent my chauffeur to collect your luggage and pay your bill, and you can repay him and start from here for the station whenever you like." It was very typical of American hospitality.

On reaching Niagara we drove from the American to the Canadian side of the river over an immensely high suspension bridge. As we were crossing it I looked down and saw what seemed to me small-size falls on my left-hand side. I asked the driver what they were called, and he replied, "Those are the Niagara Falls." I felt somewhat foolish, but from that height and at that distance they certainly did not come up to my expectations. It was a different story when one got below and behind them. I spent two nights at Niagara, and the sound of falling water was to me a marvellous lullaby.

From Niagara I went to Toronto and joined the C.P.R., finding

time to step off at Banff on the way across Canada. I wished I could have stayed at Lake Louise also, for I loved every bit of that journey across the great Dominion—the wide open spaces and the vast forests, the rugged climb up the Kicking Horse Pass across the Rockies, and the beautiful descent again to the valleys on the western side of them, and last but not least, my first glimpse of the famous Canadian Mounted Police. But I had to hurry to catch my boat at Victoria.

The steamers of the C.P.R., painted white and built on yacht lines, were extremely comfortable, and in that month of June there were only thirteen passengers on board the *Empress of China*. So far as I can recollect, in spite of that number, nothing untoward happened to any of us either on the trip or immediately after. There were several missionaries and a Consular officer or two on board as well as a girl aged about twelve. One loses a whole day in the course of that journey from west to east across the Pacific, and she was extremely anxious lest she might miss her birthday. I asked her which day it was, and curiously enough it was the same day as mine, the 10th of June. I cannot remember being very excited over the possible loss of mine, but in the event it was the 11th which we skipped, so all was well.

It is an uneventful voyage with very little to see, except a glimpse of the Aleutian Islands, but we did come in for a typhoon when we were still several days out from Tokio. As the result of great pressure I was allowed by the Captain to remain on deck, though firmly tied up to some part of it. It was quite warm and I wore nothing but a waterproof. I forget how long it lasted, but we went right through the middle of it till we came out on the other side. One could not see a yard before one's face, but the howling of the wind and the breaking of the seas over the ship constituted an exhilarating experience.

## CHAPTER VII

I LANDED at Yokohama about the middle of June 1910. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was in full force, and the position of the British Embassy in Tokio was unrivalled, and justifiably so under the leadership of Sir Claude MacDonald, the Dean of the Diplomatic Body and our first Ambassador to Japan. He had had a varied career, having begun life as a Highland Light Infantryman and as a fighting soldier in Egypt, Nigeria, and elsewhere. He had been British Minister in Pekin at the time of the Boxer troubles and had commanded the forces which held the Legation quarter there during its siege. Six foot four, slender, good-looking, and covered with medals on official occasions (he is the only person I have known who had both a military and a civil K.C.B.), he was an imposing figure anywhere, but especially so among the little Japanese. In addition he had great charm and was exceedingly quick on the uptake. I remember being present on one occasion when he displayed his native wit. The story has, I believe, been told elsewhere, but bears repeating. It was at a lunch which he gave for a distinguished and lovely but somewhat highbrow British lady tourist. In the course of a pause she asked him what he thought the most beautiful thing in the world. Somewhat naturally Sir Claude replied, "A lovely lady like yourself, Mrs. X." She professed to despise the compliment and said that the most beautiful thing in the world, in her opinion, was sleep. "How right you are," said Sir Claude, "next to the lovely woman."

The best first-hand story, however, that I can remember was a children's one. I was having tea one day in St. Petersburg with a Countess Bobrinsky, who had two small daughters, the elder being about seven or eight. They came into the drawing-room while I was there, and their mother asked them what they had been doing that afternoon. The elder girl said that they had been for a drive on the islands and had seen a lot of little children bathing in the sea. "What were they," asked her mother—"little boys or little girls?" "Oh, mummy dear," she answered, "how could we tell? They hadn't got any clothes on!"

Another quite good first-hand story was a remark of Prince Alexander, Prince Paul of Yugoslavia's eldest boy, on his return for

the holidays after his first term at an English private school, Ludgrove. I asked him about his life there and how he enjoyed it, and incidentally observed that I supposed that he was the only foreigner there. "Oh no," said Alexander, "there are quite a lot of Scotch boys."

The Counsellor was that sterling and typical Britisher Sir Horace Rumbold, afterwards to be my chief in Constantinople and later Ambassador in Berlin at the time of the advent to power in 1933 of Hitler and his gangsters. Sir Horace was under no illusions about them, and it was unfortunate that, having reached the age-limit, he was retired just at that moment. It is not often that we put round pegs into round holes, and if by chance we do we always seem to remove them as soon as possible. Sir Horace was ideally suited for Berlin, where he had been Counsellor at the beginning of the 1914 war, and he was only sixty-four when he was retired. By all means let younger men be given a chance, and the rule whereby no diplomat shall get a new post after he is sixty is excellent in principle, but it should be very elastic in practice. Diplomacy is not a wearing career and is, moreover, one where experience is often of greater value than physical activity. Nor are diplomatic methods and practice subject to change in the same sense as they are in the Navy or the Army.

Somebody, I think it was Disraeli, said that the British Empire would eventually fall "because Buggins is a good fellow and it is his turn next." However greatly one sympathizes with the young man, it is folly to move an older man simply because he has reached an age-limit, which has often nothing to do with capacity or ability. If the right man is in the right place, let the interests of the public service, and not rules and red tape, be the sole consideration, and leave him in it just as long as possible.

The other Secretary, besides myself, was Miles Lampson, now our distinguished and very capable Ambassador in Cairo. He was even taller than Sir Claude and built on a vaster scale. In the early days of the big battleship his boots were known in the family as the Dreadnought and the Invincible. He and I and the assistant Oriental Secretary, Colin Davidson, used greatly to frequent the Japanese restaurants, and it was always amusing to see Miles in the company of the tiny geishas. And lest anyone should be under a misconception, the real geisha is not a lady of easy virtue, but an artist intended for

the entertainment of guests. In Tokio the prostitute population of the city is confined to a single quarter called the Yoshiwara, and except in the more select houses they are exhibited behind gilded bars to the passer-by. The geisha, on the other hand, has probably been sold, when a child, by indigent parents to some restaurant or innkeeper, has received an exceedingly good education, and is a valuable asset and closely guarded. If she marries or has a lover, it can only be arranged through an intermediary, and the suitor must be someone who can afford to reimburse the master for all that he has spent both on education and on clothes.

Tokio was the only post I ever had where the work was really light, in spite of the fact that the entire purely diplomatic staff consisted of the Ambassador, the Counsellor, and two Secretaries. The rest of the Embassy personnel consisted of the Naval and Military Attachés, the Oriental Secretary and his assistant, the student interpreters (four or five of them studying Japanese for the Consular service), and a clerk and accountant. Most of the work (necessarily in view of their knowledge of the language) had to be done by the Oriental Secretary, Hobart-Hampden, and his assistant Colin Davidson; while the help of the student interpreters could always be utilized in the event of any rush or crisis. It was a rare occasion to have to attend the Chancery in the afternoon or on Sundays. The result was that Miles Lampson and I could invariably count on getting away for week-ends, one leaving Tokio on the Friday and the other on the Saturday afternoon, and there were always new places to visit, from Kamakura by the sea to Miyanoshita in the mountains, walking tours round Fujiyama or sailing trips in the Inland Sea.

Life, too, was refreshingly cheap. One gave one's boy and one's cook about £2 a month each and had no rent to pay, the whole staff, exclusive of the service attachés, being accommodated in bungalows within the Embassy Compound, each with its little garden plot, in which one could grow one's own flowers and vegetables. For the first and only time, at any rate until the scale of Foreign Office and diplomatic emoluments was reformed after the first Great War, I was able to live on my pay, which had risen to the majestic figure of £350 a year. Of this sum, £150 was my salary as a Third Secretary, £100 a year was for knowledge of International Law (which ceased when one became a Second Secretary), and another £100 was for knowledge

of Japanese, the exam. for which I passed after about nine months in Tokio, and which of course also ceased when one left Japan.

So far as life possibly can be, it was in Tokio in those days free from worries, or would have been had there been no earthquakes or mosquitoes or damp heat. Not that the earthquakes troubled me much, since there was no really bad one during my two-and-a-half years there, though there were plenty of them. Nor did one ever get used to them, but rather the contrary. The more of them I experienced, the more I disliked them. My first occurred very shortly after I reached Tokio. The day before I had done something which Sir Ernest Satow, who was a friend of my mother's, had particularly warned me against doing. Buy, he said, nothing Japanese until you have been a year in the country. You will only throw away everything you buy during your first year. I had, nevertheless, bought a horrible little piece of modern satsuma. The earthquake occurred in the early hours of the morning. All I thought of on that occasion, when I was being shaken about in bed, was to lift the mosquito curtain and to see if the satsuma bowl was still safe on the mantel-piece. It unfortunately was. I used it afterwards to throw at a cat which had killed my canary. Poor canary! where it had originally come from I do not know, but one day when I was sitting in my garden it flew down from a tree and settled on my shoulder, whence I picked it off and put it in a cage. Though it was apparently a hen bird and did not sing, it lived happily on my verandah until the cat from the Rumbold house one day pulled down the cage and killed it. Eventually its murder was avenged, as, though I missed the cat with the satsuma bowl, I shot it later with a little '22 rifle and my Japanese servant buried it under a rose-bush, assuring me that cats made a wonderful manure for roses.

I suffered greatly at the beginning from the damp heat. The wet season in Japan comes in June, just about the time that I arrived and before I had had time to get in any way acclimatized. I disliked it intensely. I was quickly just a mass of irritation with prickly heat and dhoby's itch and every other kind of itch; and any vacant spaces on one's body, legs, and arms were covered with mosquito bites. I didn't sleep for nights in succession and it ended by my getting jaundice and having to go for a sea voyage to recover. That completely cured me and was, moreover, a very pleasant experience. I went to Hong-Kong

in a Japanese steamer. I stayed there with General Broadwood, the G.O.C.-in-C., whose family were neighbours of ours in Sussex. He was killed afterwards in the first World War. He was unmarried, a cavalryman, and a magnificent horseman. His one regret in life was that he had not won the Grand National on his own horse Frigate as he should have done. So far as I can remember the story as he told it me, it was as follows:

Broadwood had entered Frigate for the National. Some months before the race there was a Russian scare on the Indian frontier and his regiment was sent out East. By the time it reached its destination the scare was over, and the troops were sent back to England. They got back only a few weeks or less before the race. Broadwood had then to decide whether to ride the horse himself or not. He was in bad training for such a hard course as is the Aintree one, and as all his fellow officers had their money on Frigate he decided on their advice, but against his own inclination, to put up a professional jockey. Most of the best of these were already riding in the race, but he engaged one called Piggott, who, though a good rider, had recently had a bad fall and was nervous of another. Frigate pecked slightly at the very first fence, and Piggott, riding loose in his stirrups, slipped over his head. Frigate never fell, but finished the course riderless.

Broadwood had lost a packet, but decided to put all the money he had left on his horse to win the Grand Military, which was to be run a few days later, and this time to ride Frigate himself. The day before the race Frigate went dead lame and had to be scratched. The day after the race it was discovered that a thorn had run into Frigate's shoulder when he was galloping alone round the Aintree course. Once extracted, the horse was perfectly all right again. But poor Broadwood was completely broke, was obliged to leave the regiment, and was seconded for service under Kitchener in Egypt; and he had to sell Frigate. He did so with the proviso that if it won the Grand National the next year he would receive £1,000 more. Frigate won the Grand National the next year with the greatest of ease, but in between whiles the purchaser had sold Frigate to someone else. Broadwood wrote to the new owner asking for his thousand pounds and received the reply that he had bought the horse without any such proviso. So the unfortunate Broadwood did not even get that satisfaction. Nor was the fact that he greatly distinguished himself under



Kitchener in Egypt any consolation to him for having missed winning the National on his own horse.

I stopped altogether about a week in Hong-Kong, some of the time of which was spent in a two-day trip to Canton with an American business friend. My chief recollections of that interesting city, with its vast water population living in junks on the river, were the narrowness of the streets, the intolerable smell of pork, and my failure to get permission to see two Chinese criminals beheaded. The flagship of the C.-in-C. the China Squadron arrived in Hong-Kong while I was there, a fact which proved that I had chosen well the date for my visit. Sir Hedworth Lambton was the Admiral, and the whereabouts of his fleet could always be guessed with infallible accuracy if one knew the dates of the race weeks at Hong-Kong or Shanghai, or the best season for the goose- and duck-shooting and such other occasions.

It was not till the early summer of 1911 that the Agadir incident reminded one that the world was working up for war.

The despatch of the German gunboat *Panther* to that port was in fact one of the definite milestones on the road to August 1914. The French Government not unnaturally regarded the German demonstration as a threat to their Moroccan Empire; Lloyd George in a speech at the Mansion House came out definitely on the side of France, with a warning to Germany that Britain could not remain disinterested; and the Italians, perturbed at possible German designs in North Africa, decided to stake out their own claims there without further delay, and a few weeks later declared war on Turkey and occupied Tripoli.

For some days the possibility of war was a real one and the naval position in the Far East caused H.M. Government considerable uneasiness. The Germans had in Chinese waters those two powerful cruisers the *Gneisenau* and the *Scharnhorst*, under the command of Admiral von Spee, which were to sink Admiral Cradock's ships off Coronel, to be sunk in their turn later by the fleet of Admiral Sturdee off the Falkland Islands. Together they were considerably more powerful than anything which we could put up against them in the Far East. Urgent instructions were consequently sent to the Embassy in Tokio telling us to get in touch with both the British and the French fleets with a view to their junction and co-operation. Both Sir Claude and Horace Rumbold were up at Chusenji in summer quarters and

I was alone at Tokio. The French fleet was fortunately on its way to Yokohama, but the British was somewhere in Korean waters. The only wireless capable of getting into touch with it was the Japanese official station at, I think, Nagasaki. Fortunately in those days the Japanese were friendly and I managed to persuade them to agree to send a cipher message *sub rosa* over their installation. This having been done, the next thing was to contact the French Admiral. With the concurrence of the French Chargé d'Affaires, I proceeded by train to Yokohama the next day with a bag of clubs as if I were going to play golf, and went to lunch at a Japanese restaurant. There, as it were by chance, I met the French Naval Chief of Staff, communicated to him my instructions, and informed him of the message which had been sent to the British C.-in-C. asking him to rendezvous with the French fleet at Yokohama. It was all somewhat à la Phillips Oppenheim, but quite thrilling while it lasted, that is to say until the German Government recalled the *Panther* from Agadir.

How far the Japanese were really well disposed to us in those days it is hard to say. The Eastern mind is so different from the Western that any real understanding between the two is unattainable. Superficially they were undoubtedly pro-British, and particularly their Navy, as the result of our almost active support of them in their war with Russia. But the Army was always pro-German in the sense that, not surprisingly, it admired and copied German military methods and organization. The fact is that, again most understandably, the Japanese were, like all other nations, only pro-Japanese and thinking only about themselves. Their victories over the Chinese in 1895 and the Russians in 1905 had sown the seed of expansive aggression, and like Germany and Italy, they were planning ahead. They had already established a footing on the Asiatic continent at Port Arthur, and they went another step forward in 1911 when they annexed Korea. It was astonishing what little attention that entirely unjustifiable and predatory act aroused in the Western world. But the West at the time was too preoccupied with its own complicated affairs to bother much over Japanese ambitions. So the old Empire of Korea vanished as it were overnight and the Japanese enlarged their Lebensraum by some 80,000 square miles and a population of 20,000,000. Their eyes were by now firmly set on the domination of Asia. The Germans had settled down at Kiao Chao and their elimination from there and from

their strategically important islands in the Pacific was Japan's first consideration.

The war of 1914 gave the Japanese their opportunity. So Japan joined the Allies in the first Great War, turned the Germans out of China, and obtained her strategic islands in the Pacific as the price of her support. They were very necessary to her for her eventual main struggle with U.S.A. and Britain, with Hong-Kong, the Philippines, and Singapore as the big prizes. Only when they were in her grasp could she feel really secure and govern Asia. In the meantime, in those pre-1914 days, she was learning German military and British naval methods, and many other things besides from anybody who had anything to teach which might be useful to her. And she was a star pupil, saying little or nothing but always studying and learning, with an amazing aptitude for assimilating knowledge from the art of war and the science of economics to skill at games, such as tennis and golf. Nor has anything been more remarkable than the consistency with which Japan has pursued her ultimate aim, the domination of Asia. Much was written by Homer Lea and others at the very beginning of this century about the Yellow Peril. It is strange how little was written after that Peril really became imminent. Poor Europe, she has been too distracted by her own suicidal conflicts to pay the attention which was due to the threat to her agelong predominance as a continent.

Though I was happy in Japan, I cannot say that I ever liked the Japanese themselves, and when I was leaving the country I took care to avoid looking out of the window and seeing Fujiyama, which, according to superstition, would mean returning there. There was scarcely a British or other foreign resident in that part of the world who did not infinitely prefer the Chinese on almost every count, from honesty in trade to the personal virtues. So far as the men were concerned, I personally liked my body-servant To Tanaka, another Tanaka (Ginosuke) who had been educated at Oxford and was President of the International Club in Tokio, and a couple, whose names I have forgotten, with whom I played a good deal of tennis at that time. Nevertheless one could not but feel considerable respect for the older Japanese, the descendants of the Daimyo and Samurai class who had been brought up in the courteous and heroic traditions of old Japan. Of such were Tokugawa, the son of the last Shogun who was Presid-

ent of the Senate, Field-Marshal Nogi, who besieged and took Port Arthur in the Russo-Japanese war, and Admiral Togo, the victor of Tshushima. Nogi was curiously like a bull-dog, with an extraordinary under-hung lower jaw. He had had two sons, and during the course of the siege of Port Arthur he sent them both on forlorn hopes from which neither returned. When the war was over he was content to be nominated the head of the Girls' School for the Daughters of Nobles in Tokio; and when the last Emperor died he and his wife committed harakiri in accordance with feudal tradition as a token of respect for their Sovereign.

As for Admiral Togo, the most silent man I have ever met (he was alleged by the Japanese never to say more than five words a day), when he was granted a considerable sum of money and a large new house as a reward for his victory at Tshushima he turned the house into a naval school and devoted the money to making statues of the founders of the Japanese Navy, while he himself retired to live in the tiny house in which he had always lived from the time that he was an impecunious midshipman. The statues from an artistic standpoint were hideous eyesores, but the gesture was worthy of all admiration. No, it was the youth of Japan, intoxicated by its first contacts with the West—from which it seemed, apart from knowledge, to acquire all the vices and none of the virtues—which was so intolerable, so bumptious, so unpleasant and dishonest.

Anyway, I was not sorry when I received my marching orders towards the end of 1911. But in one sense I was disappointed, inasmuch as I was ordered back to St. Petersburg. Réchauffés are never the same thing and I wanted to go some new places. I consequently wrote to the Private Secretary at the F.O., who was then Sir William Tyrrell, begging to be sent to any other Embassy in Europe (I always preferred Embassies to Legations), preferably Vienna, so long as it was not Berlin.

A Scot is always to some extent fey, and all my life I had a horror of Berlin. I used to pass through it on my way to and from Russia, but I never once resided there till I was posted there in 1937. Willie Tyrrell's reply, as was invariably the case with him, was short and to the point. It merely said that if I realized how impatiently the Ambassador at St. Petersburg was awaiting my arrival, I would take the first train there. Which to all intents and purposes I did. But

there was first a hideous ordeal to be undergone. I had always done my best to be friendly with the Japanese, and so far as the ladies were concerned that in itself was a not unpleasant task, and the Japanese determined to show their appreciation by arranging a series of farewell parties of every description, from the highly respectable to the more easy-going geisha entertainment, which meant mixing champagne with vast quantities of the Japanese rice liqueur, saki. The Tokio tennis tournament was just over, and one of my Japanese friends had won the singles and an English business-man, Rice, and myself the doubles. On some previous occasion I had been foolish enough to tell stories of my days as a student at Bonn University and the "Beer-Junges," or mammoth tankards of beer which one used to drink there. At one of the more easy-going of the parties I was hoist by my own petard in being challenged by the singles champion to see which of us could empty the huge trophy-cup filled with champagne in the shortest number of seconds. Now, fizzy champagne is a very different thing from still beer, and the cup held just a bottle and a half. I managed to get it down in, I think, 27 seconds, but I was beaten by my Japanese opponent by a good two seconds!

The last entertainment of all took place at the International Club and was presided over by Ginosuke Tanaka. I strongly suspected the upshot and walked, or rather drank, very warily during dinner. Nor was my instinct at fault. At the end of the dinner Tanaka said a few words and ended up by stating that for twelve days they had been trying to make me drunk and had completely failed, but for the honour of the Club I could not be allowed to leave it sober that evening. Consequently every guest present (there were about forty) was requested to drink a full glass of champagne in my honour and I would have to drink a full glass to each in return. A champagne bottle holds about seven glasses! And so it was, though I like to record that at the end some of my hosts took pity and stood up two at a time instead of singly. Still, I must at a minimum have drunk about four full bottles straight off. Fortunately, I used to have a head like a brick, which had stood me in good stead at some regimental mess dinners in St. Petersburg, and after it all I was still able to stand up and reply at, I was told later, considerable length. What I said was nobody's business and nobody cared, but as I went on to a geisha party when the proceedings broke up, I must have come out of it fairly well.

That was the end of Japan for me. Early in January 1912 I left for Russia again, this time via Siberia. There was a terrific gale blowing when I reached Nagasaki and I was actually the only passenger who ventured to take the Russian volunteer steamer that evening for Vladivostok. But it did not avail me. After remaining quite happily in my bunk throughout the voyage, the ship, though she weathered the storm remarkably well, was some twenty hours late in arriving at her destination, which meant that I missed my train. I am one of those people who suffer from train fever, and I cannot remember having ever missed any train but this once in my life. The grim irony of it was that I had, on this only occasion, to wait three days till the next one left, since there were only three Trans-Siberian passenger trains a week. Fortunately I experienced no discomfort, as I was hospitably entertained during my stay at Vladivostok by the British Consul there, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Robert Hodgson, who became at the end of the first World War our representative in Bolshevik Russia, first as British Agent and later in 1924 as H.M. Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow.

The journey across Siberia to St. Petersburg took nine days, but travelling was made more spacious and comfortable by the width of the Russian railway gauge and consequently larger carriages. I had a sleeper to myself which contained three bunks. The slow speed of the train, which never exceeded thirty miles an hour, made the journey smoother, while the use of wood fuel in place of coal made it cleaner. But except for the Lake Baikal and Ural Mountain areas it was very monotonous. Endless plains deep in snow with nothing to see but fir and birch woods were its main theme. There was, however, excellent caviar to be bought whenever we crossed one of the big Siberian rivers, as well as wonderfully decorative Siberian stones when one reached the Ural district. I spent only one night in St. Petersburg, and then finished my journey to Sussex for my first home leave for nearly three years. I remember being greeted in Piccadilly by an acquaintance, who said to me, "What have you been doing recently? I have not seen you in London for quite a while."

## CHAPTER VIII

IT was in many ways both politically and socially a very different St. Petersburg in 1912 from that which I had left in 1909. The German and Austro-Hungarian Embassies were no longer *personae gratae* and Russia was busily building strategic railways on her western frontier. The Duma, in spite of the intelligent and high-souled "Cadets" who played the leading part in it, had practically ceased to be, and the revolutionary spirit was taking shape behind it. But more than anything else nationalism, or pan-Slavism, fostered by the humiliation of 1908, was rampant, and to thoughtful observers (such as O'Beirne, who was still Counsellor at H.M. Embassy) the question was whether pan-Slavism or revolution would break out first. Russians never spoke French among themselves any more; everything was Russian. Rasputin, who had been exiled some years before, was back in St. Petersburg and his shadow and influence were supreme at Court. Nobody ever seemed to see him, but everybody seemed to be talking of him. A younger generation had grown up in St. Petersburg, and in society the almost traditional predominance of the sisters-in-law, Princess Belosselsky and Countess Orloff, was no longer unquestioned.

It was a period of tension. The water under the Neva bridges was seething below the surface and was ready to boil over at any moment. Nor was a crisis long delayed.

My return to Russia coincided with the outbreak of the first Balkan War. To the general surprise of Europe, the Serb, Bulgar, Montenegrin, and Greek combination made short work of the Turks, and the Russians were jubilant. But Austria was correspondingly dismayed, and anxious at the success of that constant thorn in her southern flesh, Serbia. A conference, under the aegis of Sir Edward Grey, was hastily summoned in London to establish the new frontiers resulting from the victory of the Balkan allies. The Serbs, very justifiably, demanded access to the Adriatic, a suggestion which Austria very unjustifiably but equally resolutely refused. Russia strongly supported the Serbs, and for a while war seemed to be imminent.

The creation of an independent Albania, with a German princeling, Wied, as its ruler, was the unsatisfactory solution, Serbia being com-

pensated by territories in Macedonia to which Bulgaria thought she had a prior right. The result was that Bulgaria suddenly one morning attacked the Serbs, but was thoroughly worsted by them and the Greeks, while the Roumanians, who had hitherto taken no part in the war, took the opportunity of Bulgaria's weakness to stab her in the back by marching into and seizing the Dobrudcha.

The Treaty of Bucharest in August 1913 was a terrible humiliation for the Bulgars, and of course the direct cause of their entry into the war in 1915 on the side of Germany and Austria. Yet theirs was the entire responsibility for the disasters. All the Balkan countries had begun the war by agreeing to accept the arbitration of the Emperor of Russia in the event of any difference of opinion at the end of it. Bulgaria had always been Russia's particular pet, yet when the time came, whereas all the other allies accepted, Bulgaria alone refused to submit her case to the Tsar's arbitration, and instead treacherously attacked at dawn the Serbians who had been dining with them the night before.

Nor did Serbia, though she came out of the war as the dominant power in the Balkans, feel scarcely less cheated. Her resentment, however, was directed against Austria, who had robbed her of her outlet to the sea. Her nationalism, too, had been encouraged by her successes and her confidence by Russian support, and her attitude towards Austria was consequently even more defiant than before. There was accordingly no easing of the general European tension and the Balkans remained the powder-magazine which might at any moment blow Europe sky-high.

Socially, life in St. Petersburg went on as before. Sir George Buchanan, with his wife Lady Georgina, represented Britain. There was no greater gentleman than Sir George, a man who, as Pat Ramsay (one of the Secretaries) said of him, one would like as one's neighbour in the country; while Lady Georgina once told me that in all their years of married life she had never known him harbour an unworthy thought.

The Counsellor, as I have mentioned above, was still O'Beirne with his unrivalled experience of Russian policy. The First Secretary during my first year was Eric Phipps, afterwards my predecessor in Berlin, whence he was transferred in 1937 to Paris; during my second year it was Benjy Bruce, who eventually married the well-known and



exquisite Russian ballet prima-donna Karsavina. It was in my flat that he first met her. The two junior Secretaries, Tom Spring-Rice (afterwards Lord Monteagle) and Lord Gerald Wellesley (now surveyor of the King's Works of Art), were both ardent admirers of her and induced me to give a dinner in her honour; and Benjy, who had just arrived, came to it. Karsavina's first husband, who was a small official in the Posts and Telegraphs, was one of the party on that occasion.

My own friends outside the Embassy were, as always, the Austro-Hungarian Secretaries. They were this time all small and dark and were a cosmopolitan collection. The First Secretary was a Hungarian, Count Czaky, one of the others a Baron Almeida of Portuguese extraction, a third was of Italian origin, while the Military Attaché was a Prince Hohenlohe, the divorced husband of the lady of that name who, as a friend of Lord Rothermere, flitted in and out of England during the between-wars period. The other diplomats whom I saw a good deal were the German Counsellor, Count Mirbach, who was made Governor of Kiev and was assassinated there in 1917, and Panafien, the very intelligent French Counsellor with a square-cut black beard. His star was unfavourable to mine, and I don't think that I ever won a game of bridge when he was playing at the same table with me.

The French Ambassador for one year was delightful little old Admiral Touchard. He had been specially selected to correct the unfortunate personal impression created in Russia by his predecessor, but only accepted the post with great reluctance and on condition that he returned once a month to Paris for a couple of days to see his aged mother. During all his time in St. Petersburg he never missed doing this. His colleague in Tokio was not unlike him. He too had a very aged mother, but as he obviously could not visit her monthly in France, he took her with him to Japan. She was incredibly vague and when she accompanied her son out to dinner always thought that she was still in her own Embassy. On one occasion she came to the British Embassy and of course sat next to Sir Claude. In the middle of dinner she turned to him and said, "I cannot think what can have happened to the cook: I have never known him give us such a bad dinner." When Admiral Touchard left, he was succeeded by M. Maurice Paleologue, the historian and academician, who remained in St. Petersburg till the Bolshevik Revolution.

The main events in Russian ordinary life in 1913 were the celebrations in August of the centenary of the battle of Borodino and the tercentenary of the Romanoff dynasty. At the display on the battlefield itself, no fewer than twenty-three actual participants of that epic struggle were produced—unearthed would possibly be a better word—for inspection by the Emperor. The youngest of them could not well have been less than 114 years old; the eldest was, I believe, about 125. Still, even that record was beaten by the Turk who came to tea once with Lady Rumbold in 1922 in Constantinople. He had spent his life as a porter on the quays, and if report was true he was somewhat over 140. I believe that he ended by dying in America, whither some enterprising showman transported him.

The Romanoff celebrations lasted for the whole of one week. The most important event and certainly the most dramatic was a gala performance at the opera. Everyone was in uniform and the ladies in court dress. The stalls themselves were a striking sight, being filled by generals and senators almost exclusively in red uniforms. The Imperial box facing the stage was occupied by the Grand Dukes, nearly all of them big men and some of them huge, the tallest being the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaievitch, the C.-in-C. of the Russian Armies, who was at least six foot seven. If I remember rightly, the Grand Duchesses were in other boxes, and there were no ladies in the Imperial box till the Empress entered with the Emperor. On their arrival the orchestra played the National Anthem while the Emperor, the smallest of his kinsmen, and the Empress stood in the front of the box. Amid deafening applause the Anthem was repeated I do not know how many times.

Now, the Empress, though perhaps less beautiful than her sister the Grand Duchess Serge, widow of the Grand Duke, who had been blown up by a Nihilist bomb, was an extraordinarily lovely woman. But she was ill and a nervous wreck and her face one of the saddest I have ever seen. Across her breast from her shoulder to her waist she wore a *rivière* of huge diamonds. The effort of standing so long was very tiring and she was breathing heavily. Each time she did so the diamonds shot a flash of light right across the theatre. I was in a box just below and to the right of her with a particularly good view into the Imperial box, and I can see that picture still. It was then that I was inevitably reminded of Burke's famous speech on the French

Revolution and Marie Antoinette. "Surely never lighted on this orb a more delightful vision. I thought ten thousand swords would have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult." I have forgotten the opera which was given, though I think it was *My Life for the Tsar*, but I can never forget that lovely, though pitifully tragic face and those flashing diamonds or the quotation which came to my mind.

The only other entertainment of that week which remains in my memory was a dance which Rob Hudson (now Minister of Agriculture) and I gave in the flat which we were sharing. It was the one night on which there was nothing particular happening, and the ladies of St. Petersburg decided that, as we had only just got into our new apartment, we should *pendre la crémaillère*—that is, celebrate the occasion by giving a dance there. It was a large flat, yet even so the main difficulty was to keep the numbers limited, since in addition to the dancing-space there had to be a sit-down supper, as our principal guest was the Grand Duchess Xenia, the Emperor's sister. In the end about sixty people were invited and came.

All our other difficulties were solved by the kindness of the Ambassador, who lent us everything we wanted, from his cook, butler, and footmen down to silver and glass. We had the best dance orchestra in St. Petersburg, a cotillon with flowers as gifts, and it was altogether a great success. For a day or two before, Hudson went out and lived at the Embassy and all the superfluous furniture was piled into my bedroom, leaving me just enough room to creep into my own bed.

Generally speaking, though there was feeling of greater tension in the air, life in St. Petersburg went on in the same way as during my first stay there. A party of some sort almost every evening, dances and bridge, icehills skating in the winter, tennis and polo in the summer. There was, however, no polo in 1912. It had become too expensive for Secretaries to import ponies from England and so it had to be discontinued. In 1913 it was started again on the cheap by means of Caucasian ponies. The arrangements were of course made by Serge Belosselsky, and about sixty or seventy of these wild animals were driven up in the early spring on the hoof under the charge of some Tartars. They were all completely unbroken to saddle and bridle, and the preparation for our season was extraordinarily exciting and amusing. The Tartars undertook to saddle, bridle, and mount

each pony once, after which lots were drawn for them and each player was responsible for training the ponies which had fallen to him by lot.

There were some very funny spectacles, ponies bucking and squealing and riders being thrown in every direction. On the whole, however, it was remarkable how quickly the ponies settled down both to being ridden and to the game, and by the end of the season most of them were useful players and some were remarkably good. A few, it is true, were complete failures, and one of these it had been my misfortune to draw. He went all right until I raised my stick to hit the ball, whereupon he dug all his four toes into the ground and just sat down, leaving me standing over him. Nothing and nobody could cure him of this, so he had to be sold to a farmer, who came back a week later and asked for his money back on the ground that the pony had kicked his cart to pieces. The early games were pretty dangerous performances, but in fact there were no serious accidents until the very end of the summer, when Serge Belosselsky came into collision with his own son, was badly thrown and broke his arm.

By the beginning of 1914 I had begun to get restless again. In spite of not being a particularly good mixer, I had a wider circle of friends in Russia than I ever had elsewhere. But I was in the early thirties, St. Petersburg was too expensive a post for me, and I had, moreover, a decided "Wanderlust." This time it was to Rome that I wished to go for many reasons, and after some pleading with the F.O., it was agreed that I should be transferred there.

England was at that time in the throes of the Irish crisis, and when I was on leave in March I had gone over to Donegal to stay with my brother-in-law, Charlie Leitrim, one of the most fanatical of Ulstermen and one of the most energetic of its gun-runners. I had played a small part under his leadership in smuggling some 200 revolvers and 2,000 rounds of ammunition into the Northern Counties via Stranraer. My rôle was that of a decoy, one of the revolvers being placed in my suitcase, with a view to occupying the attention of the Customs officers, while the rest of the consignment was slipped over the ship's side into safe hands. The plan succeeded admirably. My revolver was discovered after I had protested against my bag being opened on the ground that I was a Government official. I continued to protest against its being taken away from me on the ground that Ireland was in a turmoil and that I needed it for my own protection. All the

change I got was the promise that the revolver would be handed back to me if I left Ireland by the same route. While this was going on the 199 other revolvers and the 2,000 rounds were safely deposited under the seat of a first-class compartment. I was at pains to go out of Ireland by the same route as that by which I had entered. My confiscated revolver was duly restored to me, and when I got to London I went to Bradley & Bourdas, the chemists in Pont Street, and asked them to send the revolver by post back to Charlie Leitrim in a package labelled "Medicine, with care." He received it without mishap, and so the tally of the 200 was complete.

I went back to Russia a week or so later to pack up for my transfer to Rome. At one of my last parties I met M. Sazonow, the able but excitable Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs. He asked me what I had done while on leave. I told him with some complacency of my gun-running exploit. He said to me, "For Heaven's sake do not take that sort of thing lightly. Your difficulties in Ireland are Germany's opportunity. If you do not quickly settle them, Germany is going to take her chance this year rather than wait any longer." That was in April, and was the last conversation I ever had with Sazonow.

## CHAPTER IX

FATE has always been kinder to me when I left things to her than when I was active myself to obtain any special objective. This was at least true as regards the only two posts to which I particularly requested to be sent. One was Rome in 1914 and the other Paris as Minister in 1928. I reached Rome on my thirty-second birthday (June 10th), and remained there only some four and a half months. Sir Rennell Rodd (afterwards Lord Rennell of Rodd) was our Ambassador. Most of his career had been spent in Italy, and it was in no small measure due to his personality and ability that Italy did not enter the war on the same side as her allies of the Triple Alliance. The Italians disliked the French intensely and would have been perfectly ready to fight them at any time. Nor was the British Fleet in the Mediterranean the main deterrent. As San Giuliano, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, said to Sir Rennell that August, "Britain has always and greatly helped Italy and has never presented us with a bill. Unlike France, who certainly helped too, but has never failed to make us pay excessively for her support."

The war was, however, still nearly two months ahead when I reached Rome at the beginning of June. During the summer months, so long as Sir Rennell was Ambassador, the whole staff used to go down to the lovely summer residence at Posillipo which had been given to the Government by the late Lord Rosebery. Tired of the expense of its upkeep, the Treasury insisted on its being handed back to the present Lord Rosebery after the first World War. He in turn gave it to Mussolini! The property consisted of three villas (one for the Ambassador and his family, one for the staff, and one for the Chancery and other offices) in a large garden on the slope of the hillside running down to the Bay of Naples. No more delightful spot to spend the summer could well be imagined, especially as Rome is intolerably hot and dusty. I think sometimes with despair of the chances which H.M. Treasury has squandered on the ground that the upkeep would be too heavy.

Another case was Bagatelle in the Bois de Boulogne, which its owner, the heir of Lord Hertford, offered to the British Government for nothing rather than take the three million francs which the French

Government was insisting that he should accept as an expropriation price. But the guardians of the British public purse declined because of the cost of the upkeep! I wonder if such petty cheeseparing has anything to do with the remark which Bismarck made to Disraeli, when he learnt that the latter had acquired Cyprus from the Turks: "Giving up anything is decadence, seizing something is progress."

The Embassy staff and archives had already moved down to Posillipo by the time I reached Rome, and I followed them there. Sir Rennell himself had left to do his annual cure at Montecatino. But I had hardly been a fortnight at Posillipo when the world was startled by the news of the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Serajevo on June 28th, 1914. I had been through too many crises in St. Petersburg and heard too much from my friends of the Austrian Embassy not to be utterly convinced that this time there would be war. The Austrian soldiers were getting tired of their almost annual partial mobilizations against their defiant little southern neighbour, and this time it would not stop short at a partial mobilization.

An aunt of mine had died in April leaving me her residuary legatee after paying a lump sum of £5,000 to each of her other nephews and nieces. I spent a good deal of my spare time in the next month writing to my family imploring them to get the estate settled up without delay. It was obvious to me that if war broke out before it was settled up, all stocks would fall heavily and that it would consequently cost me far more to pay each cash share to my co-nephews and nieces. I failed, as it happened, and was greatly poorer in consequence. The Public Trustee was the executor and nothing was going to hurry his office in its leisurely settlement of a trustee estate.

I wanted, too, to get back to Rome and hated being left down at Posillipo. Sir Rennell had, of course, returned to the Embassy, and one by one the others were recalled there also, till I was left all alone with the Chancery servants and the archives. It was not till the very last days of July that I was ultimately sent for. I got the telegram to that effect one morning, but, thanks to having had every file and document carefully packed up long before, I was able to leave at once and I reached the Embassy that same evening.

I found Rome divided into two camps, one consisting of most of the aristocracy (with the exception of the great Colonna family), which thought that Italy should in honour remain faithful to her obligations

under the Triple Alliance; and the other, in particular the more military north, which ardently desired to fight Austria, to recover Italy's irredenta, the Trentino and Trieste, and to exclude Austria from the Adriatic. That and the question as to what Britain was going to do were the burning topics of the hour. Personally, I doubt greatly that the foreknowledge that we would intervene would have stopped Germany. But of course it afforded a facile excuse afterwards for the Germans to say "If we had only known" and to lay the blame on Britain's hesitation for the outbreak of the war.

It was, of course, to avoid all possible chance of a similar charge being levelled against us in 1939 that we gave in April of that year our unilateral guarantee to Poland. It constituted, in effect, a danger sign-post, "Thus far, but no farther," or it means beyond a per-adventure war. Even so, to the end that arch-villain and warmonger Ribbentrop never ceased to tell his master that when it came to the point we would not fight. I do not think that he believed this himself for a moment. Together with Himmler, he was a genuine and ardent warmonger, and his only object in saying so was to encourage Hitler, who hesitated to the last, and to drive him over the abyss into the conflict with the British Empire which the war-party in Germany so desperately desired and which, it was convinced, could so easily be won. Be that as it may, in Rome in 1914 we had not long to wait, and on the night of August 3rd-4th (after the invasion of Belgium had turned the scale in the Cabinet, up till then greatly divided) we declared war on Germany.

The first fortnight was a very hectic period at H.M. Embassy. Thousands of British subjects were stranded in Italy and completely destitute, since no Italian bank, except one enterprising firm at Leghorn, was prepared either to cash an English cheque or to change a five-pound note or even gold into Italian currency. It took quite a time to persuade the Banca Commerciale d'Italia to agree to a working arrangement guaranteed by the British Government to enable these unfortunate travellers to get money to pay their passages back to England. During those early days two of the Secretaries sat up also all night at the Embassy to be ready to deal with any urgent messages which might come in.

I happened to be on duty when the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* made their escape from the Straits of Messina. All afternoon hourly mess-



ages, addressed to the Admiralty and repeated to us, had been coming in from our Consulate to the effect that the *Goeben* had finished coaling, was getting up steam, that the captain had landed and entrusted his photograph of the Emperor to the German Consul, and finally that both vessels had cleared for action and were now steaming southwards. This was followed by complete silence, which lasted for several days. I have never known a night pass slower or cause greater disappointment.

The consequences, too, were momentous. Turkey was very undecided, but the arrival of the *Goeben* at Constantinople and its subsequent transfer to the Turkish Navy gave the pro-German war-party there, headed by Enver and Talaat, the encouragement and support which they needed: that and our own stupidity about the two war-ships which had just been completed for the Turkish Navy in Britain. They had been built by public subscription in Turkey and were on the point of being delivered to Raouf Pasha to take back to Constantinople. We retained them, as we had a perfect right to do, under a clause in the contract which provided for just such a contingency. But we declined flatly to refund the money immediately, as we should have done, or to give a guarantee that we would restore them, or others similar to them, to Turkey as soon as the war was over. This naturally and deeply offended the Turks and, combined with the *Goeben* incident, was probably the decisive factor, quite apart from the negotiations with the Russian Government as to the ultimate fate of Constantinople, in bringing Turkey into the war against us.

Things, however, settled down pretty quickly after that in Rome, and being a bachelor and only thirty-two, I very soon came to the conclusion that I should be serving my country better in the Army than by sitting at an office desk in the Diplomatic Service. I consequently made, with the full approval of the Ambassador, the first of a series of attempts to be allowed to join up. Sir Rennell agreed and wrote to the Foreign Office, and so did I. The replies reached us by the same bag. His was to the effect that the Secretary of State was very glad to hear that Sir Rennell could dispense with my services, as he had another post in view for me. Mine was that the Foreign Office was glad to hear that I was not necessary to the Ambassador at Rome, as it had been arranged for me to proceed almost at once to Nish, which after the evacuation of Belgrade had become the seat of the Serbian Government.

That was that, but I shall never forget Sir Rennell's immense kindness to me during those three months which I spent in Rome. Lady Rodd was in England and the Embassy cook had been given a holiday. Not only did Sir Rennell give me a room in the Embassy itself, but, when he had no other engagements, which was most nights, used to take me out to dine with him either at one of the Roman restaurants such as the Tre Veniti or at the Union Club. And when Lady Rodd did return, all he told her was that I had been very kind to him by keeping him company!

All the diplomats were members of the Union Club and each nationality had its own table. At the German Embassy there was a very ill-mannered Secretary by the name of Count Berchem, who had been a colleague of mine in Russia, whom I had disliked intensely and *to whom I had gone out of my way to be as disagreeable as I could.* The German table was not far from the one at which Sir Rennell and I used to sit. The Wolff news telegrams used to arrive about 7.30 in the evening and Berchem used the opportunity to read these aloud in French (it was the time of the Mons retreat) at the German table while we were dining. Fortunately the Union Club authorities very soon put a stop to this offensive manoeuvre.

I was sorry to leave Rome and sorrier still at being refused permission to join the Army, but there was nothing to be done about it. If one belongs to one service, one cannot leave it without authority in wartime. So at the end of October I packed my suit-cases and left for Serbia. I took no heavy luggage and left everything I could behind in Rome. Nish did not appear to me a particularly secure place to live in and I thought it wiser to travel as light as possible. I took the route from Taranto via the Corinth Canal up to Salonika, and on November 5th I arrived at Nish. My wanderlust was being satisfied with a vengeance. In that year, 1914, I had three posts. I began it in Russia, continued it in Italy, and ended it in Serbia.

## CHAPTER X

I NEVER regretted having brought only suit-cases to Nish; though in the end I got away safely a month before the débâcle and the march across Albania to the coast. In fact, the only things I sent for while I was there were some tinned stores in very portable shape, which I believe proved a great boon to the Minister and my successor. Matters looked already pretty black at Nish when I got there that November, and I heard at Salonika that Sir Charles Des Graz had sent his uniform-case down there for safety. Half Serbia had been overrun by the enemy, the Serb army was back at Kraguievatz, typhus was raging, and everyone was profoundly discouraged. Belgrade itself, which had held out till then, fell on November 30th, and it looked as if anything might happen.

Then came one of the most remarkable reactions of the whole war. King Peter, who had been ill and had handed over the Government to Prince Alexander as Regent, came out of his retirement at Banja Luka. Mounted on a white horse he reviewed his troops and told them that though he would quite understand if any of them desired to go back to their homes, he himself was determined to die rather than to yield. The effect on the Serbian army was immediate and electrifying. On the night of December 2nd-3rd it began its great counter-offensive. For eleven days it advanced without a halt, driving the Austrians before it. On the 13th it re-entered Belgrade and by that evening there were no Austrians left on Serbian soil, except for over 60,000 prisoners. The Serbs were indeed magnificent soldiers, and when at King Alexander's funeral about twenty years later Goering's colossal wreath, which he brought by air from Germany, was inscribed to "the bravest of Germany's enemies," though I naturally found it invidious, I was not surprised.

I followed closely in the rear of the advancing Serbian army and actually entered Belgrade on December 14th. It was not an easy journey, but was made possible for me by the kindness of an American doctor, Ryan, who was hurrying to take charge of the hospital there. The railway was only utilizable as far as Ralya, and the twenty-odd miles of road from there to Belgrade itself were a sea of that mud which King Alexander later described as "Serbia's best friend."

Dr. Ryan had, however, been given, or had succeeded in getting hold of, a light horse-carriage which successfully negotiated all obstacles.

I had good reasons for being in a hurry to get to Belgrade. Nish, a typical Balkan town, was hardly a comfortable residence. The Minister lived in two rooms in a peasant's cottage. The so-called Legation was a slightly larger cottage, with a top floor which I used as a bedroom. The ground floor, consisting of two small rooms, served as offices, and there was a kitchen of a sort and accommodation for the Chancery servant, who was an Austrian! But he was entirely British in his sentiments, remained with the Minister during the retreat across Albania, lost a leg in the hardships of that journey, and was still Chancery servant at Belgrade and a naturalized British subject when I went back there as H.M. Minister sixteen years later. There were a few deal chairs and tables but no other furniture in the house; there was also no safe, and I had to sleep with the ciphers under my bed. That, apart from the living discomfort, was highly unsatisfactory, and I was determined to get back to Belgrade and to our Legation there as soon as possible. I took my Serbian servant with me to help.

My first objective was, of course, the Legation, the doors and rooms and cupboards of which had been sealed up when the Mission had left for Nish. The Austrians had not tampered with anything and I found the seals intact. I made a collection of as many things as I thought might be useful, including in particular two very comfortable armchairs for Des Graz and myself, and a steel safe. My Serb servant chartered a bullock-cart, everything was piled on to it and he set off on his return journey to Ralya with instructions to wait there till I rejoined him. It took him about twenty-four hours. To celebrate the return to his capital the poor man had put on a pair of very smart patent-leather boots with brown tops which had been bequeathed him by my predecessor, Crackanthorpe. When I found him again two days later at Ralya he was bare-footed, the boots having been sucked off or dissolved in the mud.

After that, thanks to the armchairs and the safe, life at Nish was tolerably pleasant and peaceful, inasmuch as for the next nine months the Austrians, preoccupied in Russia, made no further attempt to cross either the Danube or the Save. The only other members of the

Legation staff were the Military Attaché, at first Lieut.-Colonel Harrison and later Major-General Phillips, who was most of the time with the army, and the Vice-Consul Blakeney, who spoke six languages with the same fluency as English. We had all our meals except early breakfast in the diplomatic mess, which had been rented and installed on the first floor of a restaurant. As mess servants we had Austrian prisoners, including two or three who had worked in big hotels in London. The food was simple and rather monotonous, but the only real handicap was the complete absence of butter or margarine. Everything was cooked in grease. For wines we had unlimited supplies of chianti. For exercise I rode in the early mornings on a horse lent me from the Royal stables. In the spring and early summer that was particularly agreeable, as the low hills round Nish were covered with magnificent great walnut and cherry trees. The latter were laden with fruit that year, and I used to ride up beneath one and eat as many as I wanted to or could, with the dew still on them.

So long, too, as Serbia's life-line, the railway from Salonika, remained open, there were always people coming and going, from General Sir Arthur Paget on a mission to Russia via Roumania, to Valentine Chirol, the well-known foreign editor of *The Times*, who came out with a Foreign Office official, John Gregory, to report on the situation in the various countries in the Balkans, and in particular Bulgaria. One outcome of his report was the appointment of my old friend O'Beirne as British Minister at Sofia in a forlorn effort to persuade the Bulgars not to join the Central Powers. Another visitor was Sir Thomas Lipton, who arrived at Salonika with his yacht the *Shamrock* filled with hospital stores, of which the Serbs were in great need.

Sir Ralph Paget lived with us for many months in an attempt to co-ordinate all the Red Cross activities in Serbia, and of course we had permanently with us his wife's Lady (Leila) Paget's and the Scottish Women's Red Cross units. The work these two units did was magnificent and remained an abiding memory in the hearts of the Serb peasants. I like particularly to recall one achievement of the Scottish Women's Unit under Dr. Inglis. There was a terrible epidemic of typhus throughout Serbia in those early months of 1915. It was bad enough in Nish, but the worst plague-spot of all was a township not far from Serb Headquarters at Kraguievatz. There it was so

bad that no volunteers could be found to go in and face the danger of dealing with it. The Serbs had no organization which could manage it, and though there was a mission of a hundred French doctors in the country, they had no heart for the job.

The Scottish Women's Unit had just arrived (Lady Paget's unit came later). I had been down to the Nish station to see them pass through. They were nearly all militant suffragettes, were dressed in the Gordon tartan, and to tell the honest truth were, from the point of view of looks, an unprepossessing lot. There was only one male among the forty members or so of the unit, the treasurer, a little man under 5 feet high. But I took off my hat to them then and I still do when I think of what they did. It was their first job of work and they volunteered unhesitatingly for it. They marched in to the plague-stricken village, took charge, and cleaned it up. A number of them lost their lives in the battle with the body-louse, and all honour and glory to them. The tale was the same with Lady Paget's unit when it arrived on the scene of action. It, too, suffered several casualties, and Lady Paget herself caught the disease, but happily recovered. She was invalided back to England, only to return as soon as ever she was well again to continue her work to the end in Serbia.

At Nish, as I mentioned above, the disease was bad enough and it was not unusual to see someone suddenly collapse in the streets. All my foreign colleagues used to wear camphor next their skins, and for many weeks the diplomatic mess used to smell of nothing but that. In this connection I had my first experience of the difficulty of getting small sums out of H.M. Treasury. The whole secret of immunity from typhus is cleanliness, and I decided to keep at least the Legation clean. The Chancery servant was consequently ordered to scrub the floors daily with a mixture of petrol and water, and I used myself to put a little petrol in my bath every morning. This praiseworthy attempt to preserve the lives of the Legation staff cost money, though less than £10, anyway, in all. When the charge for the petrol was included in the Legation accounts, together with an explanation of the circumstances, the Treasury refused to pay it and asked for a refund. It took six months of wearisome correspondence before we were at last grudgingly notified that we need not pay the money out of our own pockets. Later in the war I was to play a part in getting £10,000,000 out of H.M. Treasury with infinitely less difficulty.

By far the most interesting visitor whom we had out in Nish while I was there was Leo Amery, whose subsequent career needs no comments of mine. At that time he was chiefly known as a brilliant scholar, an M.P. for Birmingham, an ardent Tariff Reformer, and as one of Milner's young men. He arrived at Nish in company with General Phillips, our new Military Attaché. A greater contrast in men could scarcely be imagined. Both were in uniform, General Phillips very tall and broad and imposingly covered in gold lace and medals. Amery, very short, was in khaki which looked as if it needed pressing badly and lacking a Sam Browne belt. I remember on one occasion being up in Belgrade with the two of them during a rather heavy artillery bombardment from the Austrians across the river. The shells were constantly droning over our heads. General Phillips was clearly alarmed, I was equally so, although I hoped I did not show it, but Amery walked along completely oblivious of anything except some post-war problem which he was ardently discussing. His job was of a secret nature concerned with the possible despatch of a British expeditionary force to Salonika and included the compilation of a military handbook containing all the information which might be in any way useful to such a force, from history and topography down to useful phrases in Serb and English.

In connection therewith hangs a story which I am sure Amery has never told himself, but which was related to me by the best possible source and can be vouched for. When we did eventually send an expeditionary force to Salonika, Amery was attached to it in a staff officer's capacity. Soldiers are not particularly well disposed to political officers. On one occasion Amery's C.O. asked him a question about the country which even Amery was unable to answer. "What the hell is the good of you politicians?" said his C.O. "Here," picking up the handbook which naturally contained no author's name, "you go and study this, and then perhaps you will be able to answer questions in future." Amery picked up the handbook, saluted, and walked out. Few people could have resisted the temptation of saying, "Thanks, I wrote that myself."

The comparative quiet of those first eight months of 1915 in Serbia was but the lull before the storm broke. So long as there was any prospect of the Dardanelles expedition forcing its way to Constanti-

nople the Bulgarians remained quiet. But after its final failure and our evacuation of the peninsula it was pretty obvious that they would seize the first opportunity to stab the Serbs in the back and so pay off the old score of 1913. Doubtless they always intended to do this if they saw the chance, and I was very averse to bringing pressure, which H.M. Government were instructing us to do, on the Serbs to make concessions at this stage to Bulgaria in Macedonia. The Bulgars would have put their price so high that the Serbs could not possibly have paid it, and we should have merely alienated our friends without conciliating our enemies. The Bulgar frontier ran so close to the Salonika railway that to interrupt the service would always have been the easiest possible task.

I was not at all well and troubled with a succession of boils, and my desire to go into the Army was as strong as ever. So that summer I felt myself justified in asking for the second time to be allowed to resign. Permission was again refused, but this time I was told to come back to the Foreign Office. I did not lose a minute in obeying those instructions. Strandtmann, the Russian Counsellor, was a great friend of mine and he too was moving, having been appointed to Rome. It was then about September 10th, and he asked me to wait a week, so that we could travel together. I told him that I would not wait a day, as I believed that the Bulgars might cut the line to Salonika at any moment. So I left as soon as I could get away, took a passage on a cattle-boat to the nearest Greek port, went by train from there to Athens, and so back to Taranto and via Rome and Paris to England.

As a matter of fact the blow did not fall till about a month later. This time the Germans participated in the onslaught on poor little Serbia and the Bulgars attacked from the east. The Serbs had not a chance, but they fought valiantly as they retreated. The route across the Albanian mountains had been planned out beforehand, but their sufferings were indescribable and the army, though still intact, when it reached the Adriatic coast was literally starving and nothing but skin and bones. There it was met by Allied, chiefly Italian, ships which conveyed it to Corfu, where it recuperated and was reorganized and played a major part in the Balkans campaign of 1918. Many years later the late King Alexander, who as Prince Regent and C.-in-C. remained in the front line with his troops from the beginning to the



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end of the war, motored me to the spot at the foot of the pass over the Albanian mountains where the Serbian artillerymen buried their guns before starting on their painful retreat to the sea. He told me that the most pathetic thing of all was the way in which officers and men alike wept with despair at abandoning their beloved guns.

## CHAPTER XI

WHEN I got to London I was attached to the new Contraband Section of the Foreign Office, which worked in the ballroom. By a curious coincidence I found myself placed at a table between two other "Neviles," Butler and Bland, both spelling their names as I do (from the punning motto of the Fane family, "Ne vile fano"), instead of the more usual form of Neville. The work was not particularly exciting, but I was greatly impressed by the ability of some of the junior Foreign Office clerks, such as Orme Sargent and Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, our Ambassador in Turkey since the beginning of the present war, and whose particular job at that time was coal. My area of the world was Scandinavia, and I either conceived the idea or had it suggested to me of buying up the annual catch of Norwegian herrings, which otherwise went to Germany and constituted a considerable food supply for Germany outside the reach of our blockade. I gave the scheme the slogan of "a blockade within a blockade," and it was taken up with great vigour by the energetic and capable head of our Contraband Department, Alwyn Parker, who secured the support of the Admiralty and War Trade Department for it. Having played a leading part in its initiation, Parker took me with him when we made our first onslaught on the Treasury with a view to securing its adoption. It was a complete failure: Edwin Montagu, who was then Under-Secretary at the Treasury, tore the scheme to pieces, treated it as infinitely too costly (£10,000,000 was what the Norwegian herring industry was asking), and refused to recommend it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The undaunted Parker returned, however, to the charge and with the strong support of other Government Departments, particularly the Admiralty, we went back to the Treasury this time to see the Chancellor himself, Reginald McKenna. On this second occasion everything went like hot cakes and had, of course, been agreed upon beforehand! After we had read to him a brief memorandum setting forth the beauties of the scheme, which included feeding the German prisoners on salted herrings (which in the end they refused to eat), Reginald, puffing a large cigar, asked us how much we wanted. We told him £10,000,000. He thereupon turned to one of his secretaries

and asked who was the chief authority on the Scandinavian Exchange. On being told that it was Sir Eric Hambro, he said, "Please send for him to come here at once." In a suspiciously short time Hambro appeared and was asked if he could place £10,000,000 on the Scandinavian Exchange without upsetting it. Hambro replied that it could be done without difficulty, whereupon Reginald turned to us and told us that we might have our ten millions. So easy is it to get large sums and so difficult to get small ones out of H.M. Treasury.

Three years later I saw Edwin Montagu again at the Peace Conference, and he still asserted that this buying-up of the Norwegian herrings was the worst scheme that he had ever spent public money on. Yet both in 1917 and 1918 we repeated the purchase, and who knows how much the lack of fresh fish contributed to the sapping of German morale? Be this as it may, the fact remains that since we were not prepared to tell the German prisoners "Salt herrings or nothing," a great proportion of the herring catch was eventually used as manure for the fields in East Anglia.

Once again my stay at the Foreign Office was a brief one, a bare three months. In the course of them I made my third attempt to slip into the Army by joining up under the Derby Scheme, which came into force at that time. I went before a medical board, was classified as A1, given an armband with G.R. (general reserve) on it, and told that I was not wanted. I was also given a voucher for 2s. 3d., representing one day's pay, which—and I have always regretted doing so—I tore up in disgust. The fact is that, whereas we were encouraged to register under the Derby Scheme, the Foreign Office had no intention at that time of letting anyone go, and our names were merely wanted as eyewash to increase the numbers of volunteers, so as to impress the poor British public. The armband was, I suppose, kindly meant to save us from having white feathers pinned on to our coats in buses by officious young women. I imagine that I did nothing to conceal my discontent. Anyway, very shortly after, the Private Secretary, Theo Russell, came to me one evening and asked if I would like to go to the Paris Embassy since I appeared to be disgruntled at the Foreign Office. I accepted with relief, and at the beginning of February 1916 I packed my suit-cases again and left for France.

## CHAPTER XII

PARIS was the Allied nerve-centre of the war, and if one could not join the Army it was better to be there than anywhere else. Sir Frank Bertie, soon to become Lord Bertie of Thame, was H.M. Ambassador. Of M. Clemenceau, Lord Bertie once wrote, "He is as pro-British as any Frenchman can be," and of Lord Bertie it might equally well have been said that he was as pro-French as any Englishman could be. He had always been a loyal friend to France and he was rightly greatly respected in that country. Though somewhat short in stature, a defect which he endeavoured to remedy by the exceptionally high top-hat, almost a stove-pipe, which he invariably wore, he had great personal dignity. In the Service he was known as "The Bull," a sobriquet which he had fully earned. It was my fate later to serve under another, this time an Army, "Bull," Lord Allenby. Both, so far as I could judge by stories about them had mellowed by the time I came under their orders, though I did not escape entirely unscathed. Lady Bertie was a great lady, but one saw little of her, as she spent most of her time at Monte Carlo. She was also extremely vague. At one of the large parties at the Embassy a niece of hers made a bet as to how many times she would come in and go out and come in again without being recognized. I believe it was only at the sixth entry that Lady Bertie said, "Haven't I seen you before?"

The Counsellor was Lord Granville, the kindest and most charming of men. The only person who could succeed in irritating him and did so on every possible occasion was the Ambassador. Lord Bertie never liked his Counsellors, and was more bullish with them than towards the smaller fry. Granville had his own typewriter on which he drafted despatches for the Ambassador's approval. They were invariably returned with some defect in the typing underlined in red ink, with the comment "tooth A" or "tooth T wants cleaning."

The First Secretary and Head of the Chancery was George Grahame, whose whole career had practically been spent in Paris. When Granville went to Salonika to represent H.M. Government with Venizelos's Greek Government, Grahame became Counsellor and in 1918 was promoted to be Ambassador in Brussels, a step, or rather

a double step upwards almost without precedent, as the normal course was to become first a Minister and then Ambassador. He did not succeed, however, in returning as Ambassador in Paris, though his successor as Head of the Chancery, Eric Phipps, who, like Grahame, had succeeded in being posted there for most of his career, achieved this coveted distinction.

All the work in those days was still being done by the regular diplomatic staff; there were no typists or clerical assistants and there were some five junior Secretaries, Percy Loraine, Pat Ramsay, Monson, and Joseph Addison being among them. There were also three honorary attachés: Lord Berwick and Athelstan Johnson, who had been in Paris for years, and for a short while Lord Wilton, a young man of under twenty-one who had been invalided out of the Navy. Joseph Addison was one of the best brains in the whole of the Diplomatic Service, yet his job of work during that first year in Paris was keeping the register—that is, entering the documents which passed through the Embassy, on one side “in” and on the other “out.” When he was appointed to succeed Sir Henry Austin Lee as Commercial Secretary, a position which gave full scope for his remarkable brains, I succeeded him for another year at this monotonous and purely mechanical job. Eventually a regular clerk, Cuthbertson, was entrusted with this aspect of the Embassy’s activities and certainly did it better than either of us. Still, whatever we had to do, they were full-time jobs, with someone on duty every night till the small hours of the morning. Most of us used to drop in whenever possible in the course of the night, up to midnight, to see if the Secretary on duty needed any assistance.

It was lucky for me that I did so on one occasion after I had been just a year in Paris. A telegram had come in for the Ambassador, marked “Personal, decipher yourself.” As the Ambassador was out, the Secretary on duty had deciphered it in case it was of such urgency as to necessitate the summoning of Lord Bertie from the house where he was dining. The Secretary showed me its text. Roughly it ran as follows: “Your private letter of such-and-such a date. You may instruct Henderson to proceed forthwith to Athens”! I thus had a night to reflect on the course of action to take. One thing, however, was quite certain: I was determined, at whatever cost, not to go to Athens. To start with, the reference in the telegram to a letter of Lord Bertie’s made me suspect, not without cause, that I was being

the object of his "bullishness." He had not long before accused me very unjustly of some misdeed, and I had not hesitated to tell him so. And bulls do not like opposition. Moreover, one of the honorary attachés was an uncontrollable gossip and I knew that he had been telling tales out of school about my private life, which had given Bertie the opportunity he was seeking to get rid of me. Moreover, quite apart from the fact that to go to Athens would have meant my sixth post in two years, which seemed to me excessive, I was still as keen as ever to join the Army, particularly as the work which I was doing in Paris could have been better done by a woman or a boy with no training or expensive education at all.

When I got to the Embassy the next morning I found a message awaiting me to the effect that the Ambassador wished to see me as soon as I arrived. When I entered Lord Bertie's study he said to me, "You have got to pack your bag." Professing complete ignorance, I said with surprise, "Pack my bag—why?" "You are to proceed to Athens at once," said Lord Bertie. I told him that I absolutely refused to go to Athens. He said, "You can't do that," and I retorted that I could very well, by disappearing and enlisting in the Army under a false name as a private, and that I intended to do so. In the end, after some argument, I imagine that he relented, as he told me that if I wished to resign I could telegraph myself direct to the Secretary of State to that effect, and that I could add to my telegram that "the Ambassador has seen and approved the above." I accordingly drafted a telegram in my own name to Mr. Balfour and showed it to the Ambassador, who agreed to the above addition, and I sent it off. It was ten days before I got an answer from Theo Russell, the Private Secretary. It was as curt as possible and merely observed with no reference to my resignation that "with the utmost difficulty we have succeeded in finding someone to take your place at Athens." I consequently remained at Paris for four more years, but for at least a year Lord Bertie never asked me inside his house. After that he became quite friendly to me, and it was me for whom he sent when he received another final telegram marked "Personal, decipher yourself." He was ill in bed and unable to work, so he asked me to come and decipher it for him. It was the early spring of 1918. It ran roughly as follows: "In view of your ill-health, we have decided to replace you as H.M. Ambassador in Paris by Lord Derby, the announcement of whose

appointment will appear in the Press to-morrow morning." Some brief and perfunctory reference to Lord Bertie's long services was added. It was about 8 o'clock in the evening. Such is the gratitude of Governments!

Poor Lord Bertie! He was quite unable to get into touch at that late hour with M. Clemenceau, who was then the French Premier, or to give any prior indication to the French Government of his impending retirement. Practically all he said was, "You would not sack a kitchenmaid like that." Clemenceau, too, was deeply offended and, to mark his disapproval, at his first interview with Lord Derby on his arrival in Paris he refused, though he spoke English extremely well, to talk except in French through an interpreter. Nobody, however, could resist Lord Derby for long, and in any case he was not to blame.

But to go back to 1916. It was the time of the great German attack on Verdun and of its heroic defence by the French. "On ne passera pas," and certainly the most glorious episode of the war. But the French were losing heavily and the British were holding but a very small part of the line, which ran from Switzerland to the sea. There was consequently a good deal of grumbling at the British, and one heard the same complaints then as in 1940. I suppose it is only human, but the French always do want all the glory for themselves, and if anything goes wrong it is inevitably somebody else's fault. They disregarded the fact that we had to improvise, as always at the beginning of a war, an army out of practically nothing and that we were doing all we could and more. They bore our heavy losses at Passchendaele and the Somme with equanimity, but when they suffered the same in the Nivelle offensive in 1917 there was a serious mutiny in the French Army. The situation and France were saved by M. Clemenceau, "the Tiger," who had been kept out of all power up to that crisis by his numerous political enemies. When he became Premier and was asked to speak in the Chamber of Deputies, he replied, "I do not make speeches; I am making war." That was the keynote of his attitude. He spent much of his time visiting the troops in the front line and by his own energy and determination restored the weakening morale of the French Army and nation. His country was destined to requite him as badly as H.M. Government did Lord Bertie.

I am, however, not writing these memoirs in order to describe the

course of the last war except so far as concerns one's personal reactions to events as they occurred. I was in Paris when Big Bertha started to fire her long-range shells into that city. No one knew at first what had happened, and the first official report was that bombs had been dropped from aeroplanes flying at a high altitude. The effect, of course, was largely moral, since the shells when they exploded did little damage unless by exceptional ill-chance. Over two hundred persons were killed in this way, chiefly by falling masonry when a shell happened to make a direct hit on a church during a service on Good Friday. The Parisians, after the first shock, paid little attention to *la grosse Bertha*, but personally I was more frightened of it than I was of aerial bombardment. One knew the direction from which the shells came, and I used always to walk if possible on that side of the street, since they fell from a great height with a slight angle away from the site from which they were fired. The Embassy, too, was not far out of the line of fire, though actually the nearest miss was a shell which exploded beside the Madeleine, about a quarter of a mile away. The only damage that one did was to decapitate the statue of St. Peter which was in a niche on the outside of the building. Air-raids, on the other hand, did not worry me. My flat was on the sixth floor of a house in an impasse leading off from the Avenue Victor Hugo, called Villa Victor Hugo. The Bois de Boulogne, where there were several batteries of A.A. guns, lay just behind it. I always woke when the siren went, but I always went to sleep again immediately the guns began to fire in the Bois. The rest I was quite content to leave to Providence, and I feared the cellars more than a direct hit.

The great thing about Paris was that one was constantly getting first-hand stories of what was happening at the front from soldiers on leave in Paris. The long casualty lists, the wet winters, the ghastly waste of human life in long-drawn-out battles with little progress to show at the end of them, was just a tragedy which left an enduring impression on one's mind. Did Providence give us an island in order to send millions of our young men to fight on the Continent? It always seemed to me that we had abandoned, to our great detriment, our traditional rôle of limited expeditionary forces such as Wellington's in Spain, based on naval and military co-operation. We had fought many wars on the Continent, but the number of actual British troops engaged had always been very small. At Blenheim there were



less than 10,000 British troops in Marlborough's army; and not more than 25,000 out of the 90,000 with which Wellington fought his Waterloo campaign. We cannot dissociate ourselves from Europe, but it has always seemed to me a mistake to get too deeply involved in those far-off areas of it, where our sea and to-day our air power would be at a great disadvantage.

The anti-Munich men seemed to me not to consider at all what the fate of the Czechs would have been if we had encouraged them to fight Germany in 1938. So far as the unfortunate Czechs were concerned, the war would have been over in a fortnight at most, their armies overwhelmed by the German hordes, their tiny Air Force blasted out of existence, their cities devastated, and their women and children massacred in them. All I pray for in the future is that we shall cut our coat according to the measure of our cloth, and not attempt to live, as the French did from 1918 to 1940, on the glories of the past.

Fortunately for the world, war cannot go on for ever. Its essence is suicidal. It feeds on death, ruin, and destruction, and is in the end exhausted by what it feeds on. During the German spring offensive of 1918 no one could have hoped that the war would be over by the autumn. But the onslaught was stayed after Château Thierry had been lost and Amiens only saved by the skin of its teeth. The critical point was reached when the Germans launched their attack on Rheims on the night of the French national day of July 14th. It was a beautiful evening, and from the sixth-floor window of my flat looking to the south-east I watched the flashes of the guns and listened to the distant rumble of them all that night. The next day we learnt that the attack had been a complete failure; General Goureaud had learnt by fortunate chance of the German zero hour, had made his preparations accordingly, and the German losses had been immense. It was the turning of the tide. Mangin's 10th Army began the counter-offensive shortly afterwards, the Hindenburg line was stormed, the German armies were beaten and, though stubbornly fighting, were in full retreat towards Germany.

Actually I was on short leave in Sussex when the armistice was signed on November 11th. I was trying to shoot a few rabbits at Sedgwick when the church bells began to peal at 11 o'clock that blessed morning. I went home at once, packed my bag, and travelled

up to London that evening. One felt one must be there to see how the people reacted after the long strain of war. I went to a music-hall and to a restaurant, and I walked in the streets. It was an unforgettable experience and I felt myself more like crying than laughing.

I was more amused the next day, when there was to be a thanksgiving service at 11 a.m. at St. Paul's. An American friend of mine, Miss Hoytie Wiborg, asked me to take her to it. I told her it would be quite impossible; every seat in the cathedral was booked already and the queue waiting outside from dawn onwards would be a mile long. She insisted, however, and asked me to meet her at the Ritz Hotel at 10.30 a.m. I did so, and found there waiting, in addition to Miss Wiborg, two other ladies (Lady Curzon and Mrs. Paul Phipps), two American officers, and a small two-seater car with a dickie behind. Into this we piled, the three ladies sitting in front and the three men clinging to the dickie behind, myself in a rough shooting-suit, all I had with me except my evening clothes. Somehow we cut into the procession where there was a long gap between the Lord Mayor's coach and that of the King and Queen. The crowd cheered us vociferously with many cockney witticisms, but got back as good as they gave from Mrs. Phipps, who, as a sister of Lady Astor, lacked none of that lady's quickness on the uptake. We managed to get the car within about 100 yards of the cathedral, and there I thought we should be marooned. Not a bit of it. The ladies pushed their way through the crowd till they got within shouting distance of a member of the King's Household who was standing on one of the buttresses which jut out from the cathedral. The ladies appealed to him for help and, thanks to his intervention with the police, we were able at least to join him on the buttress. More he said he could not do for us, and we must remain in a side-aisle from which we could see nothing and nobody.

At that moment one of the War Cabinet, General Sir John Cowan, arrived. The undaunted ladies at once tackled him and insisted on his finding places for the six of us. The British soldier owed a great deal to Sir John Cowans. He had been Quartermaster-General throughout the war, and if one Department of the War Office had been well run from start to finish, it was his. Nor did his resource fail him on that 12th of November. "The only seats in the cathedral," he said, "which will not be filled to capacity will be those of the War

Cabinet, where I am going. Follow me." So we dutifully followed him, beating the King and Queen as they walked up the nave by a short head, nor could we have been better placed either to see or to hear. Thus can anything be accomplished if one is determined enough. I took off my hat to those three ladies; it was a magnificent performance, though in my shooting-clothes I nearly died of shame in the course of it.

## CHAPTER XIII

AND so back to Paris for the Peace Conference period, throughout which I remained at the Embassy as First Secretary and Head of the Chancery. I look back on those next two years as a big experience. The work in a major Embassy revolves round the Head of the Chancery, and for the first time I was holding a post of considerable responsibility at a moment of great interest. Nor could anyone have had a more delightful Chief to work under than Lord Derby. In Paris itself he was extraordinarily popular and appealed to all sections of Parisians. Not only was he the world's best mixer as well as England's greatest Peer, but he was the seventeenth Earl of Derby, immensely rich, with a racing stud in France and open house for all. His parties were always a great success, for the simple reason that he himself enjoyed them more even than any of his guests. He was accessible to all and he never forgot a name or a face, and among the great that is no small help to popularity. I remember one remarkable feat of his in this connection. At the end of the Peace Conference he gave a great banquet to all the Allied delegates at which the Prince of Wales was to be present. Now, the names of some of the delegations such as Czecho-Slovak, Serb-Croat, Slovene, etc., were new and difficult enough to bear in mind, but the names of their members would, I should have thought, have defied anyone unless he carried a list in his hand. There were over sixty persons present, drawn up in a big semicircle, Lord Derby in the middle with his private secretary, Reggie Bridgeman, in support in case of need. When the Prince arrived, Lord Derby took him round and introduced to him all the delegates without looking at a paper or even hesitating over a single name. It was an astounding performance.

But what endeared Lord Derby most to me was the unfailing support which he gave to his staff on all occasions, and particularly to myself who needed it most. Paris was packed with every kind of person, from Cabinet Ministers downwards, who thought themselves extremely important and who wanted to use the Embassy and the Embassy servants for their private affairs. The work of the Embassy would have been completely disorganized if I had allowed this advantage to be taken of our hard-worked staff. I gave orders that no

outside jobs were to be done except after prior reference to myself. But it meant clashes with all sorts of important people. They used to go away and either speak or write to Lord Derby. His invariable answer was, "My Secretary is quite right and that is that," or words to that effect. It was an immense comfort to have at one's back a man who was no respecter of persons and big enough to take all responsibility on his own shoulders. On one occasion two pheasants arrived in the Foreign Office bag, sent by the Prince of Wales for despatch to two French ladies of his acquaintance. It was strictly forbidden to send game by bag, and in any case one address was outside Paris and under some French regulation the parcel could not have been sent to its destination. I consequently gave orders that lots should be drawn in the Chancery for the pheasants (Nigel Law drew one of them) and wrote to H.R.H.'s private secretary explaining why I had been compelled to take this course. I was lunching with the Ambassador that day and told him what I had done. Considerable horror was expressed by some of his guests, but Lord Derby's comment was, "Henderson did quite right," and that was the end of the matter. He was a most considerate Chief, and I can recollect only two occasions on which I incurred his wrath. The great thing when that happened was to wait till after a meal, when he was always more mellow; but if that was impossible, to face the storm, knowing full well that once it had blown itself out it was finished and forgotten. For that and other reasons I have an abiding respect and affection for Lord Derby, which his subsequent rare interventions in my life did but strengthen.

But to return to the Peace Conference. The first big event was the triumphal arrival of the President of the U.S.A. I went to the Champs Elysées to watch him drive with his newly married wife down that most beautifully proportioned of all city thoroughfares. One got the impression, from the attitude of the crowd, that one was witnessing the advent of a Messiah who had come from the West to save suffering Europe. I got an entirely different and personal impression a few days later when Mr. Woodrow Wilson came to dinner at the Embassy with Lord Derby. It was a big dinner, and I sat at one end of the long table among the small fry, with nothing to do but to watch the great from my post of vantage. Mr. Wilson had large teeth and he masticated his food very slowly. That of course was a mere detail in the general impression. But it was not that of an outstanding personality

or even of greatness, and I recollect saying to myself with great sadness (for I had been as optimistic as anyone else), "That man is not and can never be a Messiah." I did not realize then that his failure to attach Republicans as well as Democrats to his mission, and his preference for yes-men of his own party instead of strong characters of the Republican party such as Mr. Elihu Root, were going to wreck all prospect of American co-operation in the future governance of Europe. As it was, it would have been better for the honour of the U.S.A. if the President had never come to Paris at all to inspire hopes that were not destined to be fulfilled. Poor Wilson! in the end I felt sorry for him. He was up against two men in Clemenceau and Lloyd George who were both cleverer and more persistent than he, and knew their own minds better. Without even the support of his own people however good his intentions he was fighting and fought a losing battle. Nevertheless, he left his mark on the Treaty by the inclusion in its provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the establishment of the principle of the right of self-determination.

The Peace Conference itself, rather like the war, dragged on till June 20th, 1919, when it came to a conclusion in the form of the Treaty of Versailles, a volume of many hundred pages, apparently containing everything that could possibly be thought of, except the one provision which might have saved it from being ultimately torn up by Hitler, namely, a clause providing that it should be reviewed and, if desirable, amended after a fixed period of years by free negotiation on the part of all those countries whose representatives had signed it. It is, of course, easy to be wise after the event. No treaty was ever inspired by higher principles and ideals, no frontiers have ever been drawn before in Europe which correspond so nearly to the wishes of the populations within them. But the task was superhuman, and it was fatal presumption on the part of human beings to imagine that a treaty which had been drawn up in the year immediately succeeding four years of bloody war and revolting cruelties would stand the test of time. Fear and Hate, those two worst of counsellors, were the guiding influences so far as the French were concerned, and the "Khaki" or "Hang the Kaiser" election in Britain tied the hands and influenced the attitude of that great democratic leader, Lloyd George. As H. A. L. Fisher puts it in his *History of Europe*, "In the inflamed atmosphere of Paris the ideals of appease-

ment fought an unequal battle with those of retribution." Poor abused word "appeasement," so misinterpreted by the passionate prejudices of the moment, yet so indispensable and invaluable if the world is to go on striving towards the brotherhood of man in the Federation of the world.

I attended the signing of the Treaty in the *Galérie des Glaces* at Versailles. Yet even at that early moment one sensed a feeling of deception and disillusionment and a suspicion that the great opportunity which all the world at that time sought so ardently, and had the right to anticipate, had been lost. Nobody was really satisfied (though that perhaps would have been too much to ask) except possibly the British, who did believe in the ideals and workability of the League of Nations. The Germans were left bitter and resentful, and as for the French they felt they had been let down by both the Americans and ourselves, and in Paris the saying went that "the French army had won the war but Clemenceau had lost the peace."

Part of my work at the Embassy was to read daily some fifteen to twenty French newspapers and to make extracts from them of any passages affecting Britain. It was almost a whole-time job during the Peace Conference, so numerous and so violent were the attacks on us in the French Press. As a distinguished diplomatist, who found me busily typing out these extracts one morning, said to me, "If an inhabitant from Mars completely ignorant of events on Earth had landed in Paris one morning and started to read the French newspapers, 'Hullo,' he would say, 'I see there has been a war on between Britain and France.'" In the end that reading of the newspapers and extracting the guts of them became too onerous a task for the Head of the Chancery, and I managed to relieve myself of it, thanks to Lord Derby's support, by getting Charles Mendl appointed Press Attaché to the Embassy. I still look back on that appointment with the utmost satisfaction. Mendl, with his many contacts in Paris, proved himself invaluable to a long series of Ambassadors, and, in spite of sporadic efforts by his enemies to dislodge him, he held the post till France was overrun in the present war, when Sir Charles Mendl, as he had become, departed for the States with his remarkable American wife.

The first concrete evidence of what Frenchmen felt about the Treaty of Versailles was shown in the elections for President of the

Republic, which took place in the summer of 1919. The obvious choice was M. Clemenceau, the man above all others who had saved France. Indeed, until a bare few days before the election there was no other candidate in the field, and it would have been a graceful tribute to the long years of service of that great Frenchman, who had been a deputy at the time of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and had spent his life working for the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine, if he had been elected unanimously without opposition. But it was not to be. No one had merited the nickname of "the Tiger" more than he, and even at eighty his claws were as sharp as ever. There were many private intrigues and animosities which counted in the balance against him. Yet perhaps what tipped the scale was the feeling in France that Clemenceau had "sold the peace." At the eleventh hour a rival candidate was put forward in the shape of M. Paul Deschanel, whom Clemenceau had actually fought and wounded in a duel many many years before, and it was he on whom the choice of the French Senate and Chamber of Deputies fell. It was a disgusting exhibition of a nation's ingratitude, and I remember drafting at the time a somewhat violent despatch on the subject to the Foreign Office for Lord Derby's approval. It was returned to me with considerable and no doubt fully justifiable alterations. It is still all the more vivid in my memory since it was, to the best of my recollection, the only draft I wrote for Lord Derby which he ever altered.

Once the Treaty of Versailles had been signed, and the Captains and the Kings had departed from Paris, Lord Derby began to think that it was time that he also left France, in order to look after his vast interests in Lancashire and elsewhere, and the question of his successor at once arose. As Head of the Chancery, Lord Derby was good enough to discuss the question with me, and we had many arguments on the subject lasting over many weeks. Lord Derby favoured Lord Reading, a choice which I strenuously opposed on the sole ground that the French would object to a Jew as British Ambassador. I had myself a candidate, a regular diplomatist, Sir Esme Howard (afterwards H.M. Ambassador in Washington and later Lord Howard of Penrith). Unfortunately Lord Derby was just as strongly opposed to him on the ground that he was a Catholic as I was to Lord Reading on the ground that he was a Jew. And so it went on till one day Lord Derby, returned from London, sent for me and said, "You've



won." I asked if Sir Esme Howard would be appointed, and to that Lord Derby said, "No, but at any rate it won't be Reading." Then he remarked, "I suppose you were right and that Reading would not have been welcome in France. The Jews as a whole are not liked, yet if there were a St. Bartholomew's massacre of them in England every one of us would save one pet Jew." Then he scratched his head and added, "As a matter of fact I would save two; but I would make the second run for his life before I saved him!"

The choice in fact had fallen on Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, an unfortunate one for me personally. He was a widower, and his newly appointed Chancellor, Ronald Lindsay, was also a widower. I was a bachelor, and it is not surprising that Lord Hardinge wanted to have a First Secretary at least who was married, and whose wife could help him and his daughter entertain. I realized this as soon as I learnt who Lord Derby's successor was to be. I told Lord Derby that I felt in my bones that if Hardinge came it would mean my going. Lord Derby pooh-poohed the idea, but to my regret I was right. I did not at all want to be moved until I became a Counsellor, which I should normally have done in a year or two's time. The position as Head of the Chancery in Paris was the best that a First Secretary in the Diplomatic Service could hold. The responsibilities were great, but I enjoyed them and I had dug myself in. The work was exceedingly hard and long, but that I liked also. I always liked work if it was something worth doing. I had gone on doing it in Paris in spite of very great discomfort caused by a duodenal ulcer. But once that had been removed or rather short-circuited in April of 1920, I was fitter that summer than I had felt for a long time and only too anxious to work. The operation itself had been performed by the greatest of all French surgeons, de Martel, a son of the Comtesse de Martel who wrote so many French novels under the pen-name of Gyp. Martel's end was a tragic one. He lost his only son in the 1914-18 war, and the occupation of Paris by the Germans in 1940 was too much for him. He committed suicide on the day that they entered the city. In addition to his great skill as a surgeon he was a very charming man.

I remember a curious coincidence in connection with that operation, one of the five that I have had in my life. I had received the report of the X-ray experts indicating in medical phraseology, which I did not understand, the presence of the ulcer, and I had shown it

one Friday evening to my doctor, Maurange. He had explained the nature of the malady and told me that there were two cures, one by means of a régime and treatment which might last six months or six years, or all my life, and one by an operation which had been recently discovered and practised by two American surgeons. Which, he asked, would I prefer, adding that it was a major operation with a mortality of some 7 to 10 per cent. I replied that I would think it over and give him an answer the next morning. That night I was dining with Charles Mendl, and on leaving I asked him if he could give me something to read. He lent me Buchan's latest book *Mr. Standfast*, one of the Thirty-nine Steps series. I started to read it when I went to bed. Early in the book a certain American, Mr. Blenkinsop, who had played a great part in *Greenmantle*, reappeared, but not as formerly as a dyspeptic and chronic invalid, but as a man who could eat a mutton chop first thing in the morning. The hero, Colonel Hannay, asked him how he had managed it, whereupon Mr. Blenkinsop described how he had been cured by being operated on by the Mayo brothers of West Springs. He described the actual operation which Dr. Maurange had proposed to me that evening. That was good enough for me: I put the book down and went fast to sleep, and as soon as I woke the next morning, which was Saturday, I rang up Dr. Maurange and said, "Operation, please, provided it can be done on Monday morning, that de Martel will do it, and that I can have it done in my own apartment in the Villa Victor Hugo." Maurange's answer was, "You can have de Martel, have the operation on Monday, and have it done in your apartment, but you've forgotten the most important thing of all, a good nurse." However, he managed to secure her in the course of the day and everything else was arranged according to schedule.

After three months I was completely cured and was most unwilling to leave Paris. But Fate, which knew what was best for me, decided against me, and very soon after Lord Hardinge's appointment became definite I received a letter from the Private Secretary to the effect that it had been decided to transfer me from Paris elsewhere. It was a very different communication from that which had given me my marching orders for Athens three years before. This time I was offered the choice of about a dozen posts. Some, the letter said, were vacant at once, some in a few months' time, and one was described as "eventually."

The last-named was Constantinople, and, if for no other reason than that it seemed to afford the prospect of remaining in Paris longer than the others, I selected Constantinople. It was then about September, and within a month I was definitely told to go there, still as First Secretary. Such was the bogus value of the word "eventually." Not that I am complaining, for from 1922 onwards Turkey was the centre of interest in Europe, and my time there, apart from Berlin, the most interesting and responsible of my career as a diplomatist. When I did actually start for my new post in November, I left Paris for Turkey on the same day that Lord Derby returned to England.

Curiously enough, during that summer of 1920, before there was any question of my going to Turkey, I had had a good deal to do with Constantinople. In the absence of both Lord Derby and Sir George Grahame, I had twice been left in charge of the Paris Embassy for short, but quite eventful, periods. During the first I had been instructed by the Foreign Office to persuade the French Government to agree to the status of the foreign representatives in Turkey being reduced from Ambassadors, as they were before 1914, to Ministers. I had failed to induce the French Government to agree to this step, chiefly because they were reluctant to take it themselves, but also because, while the matter was still under discussion, the Italian Government had solved the matter by nominating an Italian Ambassador to Constantinople. After which the French Government, of course, refused to admit that their representative should hold a lower position than the Italian. The second occasion when I was in charge was at the time when the Bolshevik armies were threatening, and looked to be on the point of occupying, Warsaw. Very wisely the French Government decided to send General Weygand with about 1,000 French officers to help the Poles, and, thanks to Marshal Pilsudski and Weygand, the Poles, in an almost bloodless battle, forced the Russians to retire and to make peace again.

During these events H.M. Government had sent Lord D'Abernon to Warsaw, and he returned from Poland during my charge-ship, and we had several long talks on current events, both in Paris and on a journey we made together back to London from Paris. Inasmuch as he had begun life in a sense in Constantinople, I described to him in detail my abortive attempt to get the French Government to consent to the establishment of a Legation instead of an Embassy there. Lord

D'Abernon was greatly interested and discussed who should go there as British Ambassador. When I told him that Max Muller had already been appointed British Minister, he said that would have to be altered. "In that case," I said, "I can think of no one more suitable than Sir Horace Rumbold," who was then our Minister at Warsaw. Lord D'Abernon entirely agreed, saying that he had greatly appreciated Rumbold's sound common sense during his own visit to Poland. Out came his pocket-book and in it he made copious notes of such details of Rumbold's career as I was able to give him. When we parted he patted the pocket in which he always carried his notebook and said to me, "I shall be seeing Lloyd George and Curzon at once." Within a month both Sir Horace and I were gazetted to Constantinople. Thus on small incidents do great matters sometimes depend.

## CHAPTER XIV

I TRAVELLED out to Constantinople on the Orient Express towards the end of November 1920. The journey from London at that time took about four days, and as often as not the train was held up by the strikes which were so prevalent in Italy till Mussolini took charge there. On any train journey I always used to wear an old coat, a pair of flannel trousers, and that much abused and maligned article an old school tie, generally the old Etonian cricket colours known as the Eton Ramblers or that of the I Zingari. On the train throughout the journey was a red-headed Britisher who often stared at me, as I thought malevolently. Certainly he gave no sign of wishing to talk to me or to make my acquaintance. Two days after I got to Constantinople I was told that the Military Attaché, Colonel Baird, wished to speak to me. To my surprise, who should walk in, resplendent in the uniform and gold lace of a full Colonel, but my fellow-passenger on the train. He was himself both an Eton Rambler and an I.Z., yet he had spent four dull days on the same almost empty train without saying a word to me. That could not happen in the case of anyone else than an Englishman, or of a Scot, as we both were. Afterwards he became one of my dearest friends, and I was very unhappy when he was killed in a motor accident some ten years later. By then he had retired from the Army and become Secretary of the Carlton Club, a job which he ran extremely well but which was utterly unworthy of his great qualities and ability.

Sir Horace Rumbold had preceded me and was already installed as High Commissioner (with rank as Ambassador). The Counsellor, Frank Rattigan, had not arrived, and until he did the post was filled by a very sagacious Consular officer, Harry Lamb (afterwards Sir Harry and Consul-General in Smyrna, where he worthily played his part in helping such as could be helped when Mustapha Kemal's troops entered and sacked and burnt most of that unfortunate city in 1922).

The Levant Consulate was a specialized branch of the Consular Service, and it is noteworthy what a number of capable and distinguished officers it turned out. The Chief Dragoman or Oriental Secretary at the Embassy, Andrew Ryan, later our Minister at Jedda

with Ibn Saud, was another of them. His thoroughness was almost German; he never skipped anything, but started at the very beginning and went on to the very end, often a lengthy business but always worth while. He was afterwards one of our delegates at the Lausanne Conference, and Lord Curzon said of him on one occasion, "I always knew truth was at the bottom of the well, but I have never met such a deep well as Ryan." But the truth was there if one had the patience to wait for it. Sir Horace could have had no more competent counsellors on Turkish affairs than Lamb and Ryan. The efficient head of the Chancery was Geoffrey Knox, and among the Secretaries was Harry Crookshank, who had joined the Diplomatic Service after the war (in which he had served in the Grenadier Guards with considerable distinction and been twice wounded). But his heart was not in diplomacy, and he soon left it for politics. Diplomatic or Foreign Office training seems to be remarkably helpful in politics, vide the careers of Lord Stonehaven, Lord Eustace Percy, Duff Cooper, Rob Hudson, Harold Nicolson, and others, including Crookshank (now Financial Secretary to the Treasury). In the pre-1914 days it was the Honorary Attachés who served at an Embassy abroad without pay who were diplomacy's political seedlings. When I joined the Service there were three such attachés together at the same time in Constantinople, all of whom played a big part later in politics, George Lloyd, Mark Sykes, and Aubrey Herbert.

My own job at the Embassy in Constantinople was a special one, namely, to clean up the mess which had been left at the Embassy after it had been run by the Navy as a "stone frigate" for nearly two years. with Sir John de Robeck and Admiral Sir Richard Webb as High and Acting High Commissioners. On board ship naval officers can be economical enough, but put them on land jobs and they run riot. The waste that was going on in the Embassy was incredible. Luckily I found to help me a most able little Irishman, Brickell, who had once had De Valera as a mathematical master. Thanks to his assistance, after a little over a year I found that we had sacked thirty-three individuals, from chauffeurs to officials drawing twice my pay, had doubled the efficiency and rapidity with which the work of the Embassy was done, and had at the same time saved H.M. Government about £60,000 a year. In those early days after the war Embassies were not yet so fully staffed as they became later, and in consequence thirty-

three represented a considerable reduction. I remember General Harington once asking me whether I was not terribly unpopular at the High Commission. My answer was that that was nothing compared with my popularity with those who survived the purge. Every dismissal had, of course, to have Sir Horace's final agreement, but he never intervened except in one instance.

The head kavass or native servant (practically all were Albanians and looked extraordinarily fine on gala occasions in their fezzes, red uniform, scimitars, and revolvers) was one Osman who was long past his job and in fact was doing, and able to do, literally nothing. I sent a chit to Sir Horace saying that I proposed to replace him by someone more active. It was returned to me with a note in Sir Horace's precise handwriting in red ink to the effect "I have a rooted repugnance to getting rid of old servants." I took the lesson to heart and used similar language later myself when occasion arose. So Osman remained; but when Sir Horace left for Lausanne in November 1922 I solved the difficulty by giving him the job of being my permanent personal attendant. He did that and nothing but that. It meant no walking for him at all. Either he sat beside the chauffeur in the official car or he accompanied me on board the *Makook*, the 80-ton steam yacht which the Embassy had bought from the Turkish Government at Constantinople for going up and down the Bosphorus. It had originally belonged to the Khedive of Egypt, but had subsequently been acquired by Enver Pasha. For such purposes Osman could not have been improved upon. Old he might be, but he was still a magnificent specimen of humanity. Bowed as he was, he stood at least 6 feet 4 inches and was 54 inches round the chest. He looked the part and filled it to perfection. I became very fond of the old man, and he knew it and was utterly devoted to me. I was on leave in Sussex when I was transferred at twenty-four hours' notice to Cairo, following on the murder of Sir Lee Stack in 1924. The news reached the Embassy at Constantinople by wireless, and when Osman heard it he sat down, as my Montenegrin servant who joined me later in Cairo told me, and wept bitterly for half an hour. And only three years before I had tried to sack him! Once Albanians have taken you into their confidence and to their hearts and trust you, there are no more loyal and faithful servants in this world. Before I finish with Constantinople I shall have an example to give of this fidelity.

When I arrived in Constantinople, the Grande Rue de Pera was more like the Nevsky Prospekt of St. Petersburg than the main street of the Turkish capital. It was packed with thousands and thousands of Wrangel's White Army, which had just been evacuated, mainly in British ships, from the Crimea. It was a pitiful sight, but, as always, the Russian women were marvellous. They set up shops and restaurants, and Heaven knows what beside, and in general kept their men alive. It was the French Government which, all credit to them, took charge of the Army and found them quarters and accommodation and work. Wrangel himself I used to see from time to time. In the good old pre-war days he belonged to the Garde à Cheval, Prince Serge Belosselsky's regiment, and was one of the few Russians who used to play polo with us at St. Petersburg. The Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovitch was another, and occasionally Prince Michael Cantacuzene, who had married Julia Grant, a daughter of the famous Federal leader of the Civil War.

The political situation at Constantinople at the end of 1920 was a complicated one. The capital itself was in Allied occupation, and it was the three Allied High Commissioners (British, French, and Italian) who in the final resort governed it, since at their back were the three Armies of Occupation and three powerful Fleets. General "Tim" Harington was G.O.C.-in-C. the Allied Forces and Admiral de Robeck the Senior Naval C.-in-C. We co-operated with the Sultan's Government, of which Tewfik Pasha, a typical old Turk, was Prime Minister. But the Sultan's writ only ran where the Allied Armies of Occupation could enforce it, i.e. in Turkey in Europe, with a narrow strip on the Asiatic side. Over in Asia Minor the real Turkey of Mustapha Kemal with his National Pact took no orders from anybody and defied both Allies and the Greeks. For, largely to prevent another possible Italian coup à la Fiume, the Greek armies of Venizelos had occupied Smyrna in the spring of 1919 and were trying to force their way to Angora to succour the great numbers of Greeks in Anatolia and to overthrow Mustapha Kemal. It was a war in which the three occupying Powers, who merely controlled Constantinople and the Straits of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, took no part. So long as the Greek nation was united under Venizelos the Greek armies in Anatolia fought fairly successfully and stoutly. But the plebiscite in Greece at the end of 1920, which restored the monarchy to power and



exiled Venizelos, had in one respect an unfortunate result. Owing to the removal of a number of Venizelist officers from their command, the morale of the Greek army was undermined and its position in Asia Minor became precarious. Nor was it helped by the separate peace which the French Government thought fit, while the Sakaria battle was being fought, to make with Mustapha Kemal in 1921. Most of our subsequent troubles during 1922 were due to the deplorable part which the French Government, under the leadership of M. Poincaré, played vis-à-vis the Turkish Government at Angora.

During my first year at Constantinople, 1921, things, however, went smoothly enough. The meetings of the three High Commissioners were held weekly and we had little serious trouble to deal with from the Turks. The greatest thorn in its side was in fact the American representative, a pugnacious Admiral, Bristol by name, who also called himself a High Commissioner and declined to be bound by any of the Allied decisions or to recognize the special position of the representatives of the occupying Powers. When, to give a minor instance, the *Makook*, flying the High Commissioner's flag, went up or down the Bosphorus, all Allied warships dressed ships and piped to stations. Not so the few American warships, which had strict orders to pay no attention whatsoever. One U.S. destroyer always surreptitiously disobeyed them, but the only exception to this indifference occurred at the end of the story and will be related in due course.

It was not till the early summer of 1922 that the trouble began. Until then things remained quiet, though there always seemed to me an air of unreality in our effort to bolster up the Sultan's Government at Constantinople, when the whole of the real Turkey, in Anatolia, was solid behind Mustapha Kemal. We just drifted along then, as we did elsewhere, and everywhere later, till one after another the Dictators arose and acted while we marked time. Mussolini was at the time already planning his march on Rome for the following year. Though it was not the Turkey of pre-war days, life was pleasant enough on the Bosphorus that summer of 1921. The British summer residence at Therapia had been burnt down in 1913, but Sir Horace rented the old Austrian residence at Yenikevy and some of us lived at Therapia in what used to be the Secretaries' house and which had escaped the fire in 1913. It too, however, was burnt through the carelessness of a caretaker in the winter of 1921-22.

It was on our way there one afternoon that Knox, another Secretary, Mack, and myself had a curious motor accident. The road which ran along the Bosphorus was full of pot-holes, and turning the wheel to avoid one of these the steering shaft of our car broke. When it did so, the car was pointing towards the Bosphorus, and the chauffeur, an army driver, could neither turn the car nor stop it quickly enough. So over the 10-foot parapet we went into the Bosphorus. It was luckily an open car. We did not overturn; we landed with all four wheels squarely on the water and sank in about 20 feet but, in consequence of the speed at which we were going, quite a distance from the shore. As the car went down we just floated out of our seats and hurriedly swam back to the side. Hardly had we got there when we heard feeble shouts behind us and had to return to rescue the chauffeur, who could not swim at all. Personally I never even lost my hat, though I did my stick, which was of the sword variety and which I had bought years before in Japan. We had fortunately not far to walk to get home. But it might have been serious, and I felt still more, as I have always done since my experience in Cuckoo Weir, that I was not born to be drowned.

One of the High Commission's most successful efforts was to organize a cricket team, though it meant calling up almost every available man. With so many soldiers and sailors in Constantinople there was a lot of cricket during the next two years, and we used a very pleasant little bit of ground over on the Asiatic side at Beicos. The actual pitch was matting and some of the out-field rather rough, but we had many happy matches there. To start with, we had the nucleus of a team in Frank Rattigan, who had played several years for Harrow (he was marvellous at all ball games), and Baird, who had kept wicket for two years at Eton. One of our temporary staff, Vernon, had played for the Warwickshire gentlemen, and De Valera's ex-pupil developed into a very useful fast bowler. We played all the Navy's and Army's best sides and won quite as often as we lost, and would have won still more often if the catching capacity of some of our indispensable rabbits had not been so deplorable. But they were stout-hearted rabbits all the same and always ready to play, though their actual effective share was infinitesimal.

The heart and soul of the cricket in Constantinople was Tim Harington, who at fifty still played hockey with his men and swam the

Bosphorus. He had been one of the outstanding Chiefs of Staff (with Lord Plumer) in the 1914-18 war, and the organization and administration of his army in Constantinople was super-excellent. Nothing was omitted which could be conducive to the health, fitness, and recreation of his soldiers. But he had one failing, which presumably ruined his prospects of eventually becoming C.I.G.S., as many anticipated that he would. He was too gentle and nice and could not be ruthless enough when severity was necessary to obtain efficiency. Some of his own staff officers were highly unsuitable, but the General simply would not get rid of them, and in the end General Sir Hastings Anderson had to be sent out from the War Office to give them their marching orders. Personally I was extremely fond of him, and we worked together very closely all the time that I was in Turkey.

It was in June 1922 that our real troubles began. By that time Frank Rattigan had left the Service and I had been appointed at first as acting and then as substantive Counsellor in his stead. Rumbold was away on leave and I was in charge of the High Commission when the Greeks, realizing that they were fighting a losing battle in Asia Minor, gave obvious indications of trying to find compensation by marching into Constantinople. It would have been utter madness to make the attempt. The Allies were in occupation there and they could not have sat back and allowed the Greeks to take over from them. And even if the Greeks had obtained temporary possession they could never have held the city. Moreover, the Italians hated the Greeks and Poincaré was flirting with Mustapha Kemal. I decided that the best way of preventing any rash move on the part of the Greeks was for General Harington to make a public and definite announcement to the effect that any attack on Constantinople coming from whatsoever direction (i.e. from Turks or Greeks) would be unhesitatingly opposed by the Allied forces. I rushed round and saw my Allied colleagues, General Pellé and Garroni, and naturally without difficulty obtained their concurrence. Then I prepared a draft declaration for General Harington, who with some slight modifications published it the next morning. There was no further threat of a Greek attack after that, and when the Greek Government later asked the Powers officially for permission to invade Thrace and occupy Constantinople, it was refused. I have always personally hated my action on that occasion, for I have had all my life the highest regard for the Greeks, whom I look

upon as the one race in Europe which is sincerely and whole-heartedly pro-British. They gave striking proof of this during the Boer War. At that time the hand of everybody on the Continent was against us and every country did everything in its power to show their dislike of us, except the Greeks, who raised a large sum of money to be devoted to the British Red Cross detachments. But in the case of Constantinople I do not think that I could, or should, have acted otherwise.

A bare two months later the blow fell in Anatolia. The Greek forces were completely routed by the army of Mustapha Kemal, led by General Ismet but under the Ghazi's own direction; Smyrna was occupied by the beginning of September amid ghastly scenes of horror and massacre, and almost before we knew where we were Kemal's troops were threatening the Allied outposts at Chanak.

September and October constituted a period of grave crisis, during any moment of which we might have found ourselves at war once more with Turkey. Even a minor incident might have started it, though I believed then, and do still, that Kemal was always bluffing and had no intention whatever of fighting the same Britain which had so recently inflicted such a crushing defeat on the Turks in Palestine. British troops, including a brigade of the Guards, Grenadiers, Coldstream, and Irish, poured into Constantinople. The Mediterranean Fleet, already very strong, was reinforced by a battle squadron from the Atlantic Fleet, and at one time there were actually five British admirals at the same moment in Turkish waters. One of them was Lord Chatfield, who was afterwards for so many years First Sea Lord, and to whom Britain owes it that she had a fleet worth calling one at all in 1939. The Guards Brigade was commanded by Julian Steele, the Grenadier and Coldstream battalions by Lord Roundway and St. Andrew Warde Aldan, who had both been at school with me, and the Irish Guards by Alexander, then the youngest Colonel in the British Army. He was barely thirty, but even so older than any of his officers.

That the spark was not lit was due, apart from Kemal's bluffing, to the very considerable restraint exercised by General Harington. But there was one night when we all thought the war had actually broken out. Colonel Baird had gone to Harington's headquarters and I was telephoning some message to him, when our conversation was abruptly

cut off by a sergeant-major's voice saying "Be prepared," which was the code word for "action stations." The danger-point during all this time was Chanak on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles, which was held by British troops, including a battalion of the Rifle Brigade, and in front of which lay what we called the neutral zone. We had defined its area to the Turks and had solemnly warned them that if they entered it they would be at once fired upon. Communication between Chanak and Constantinople was maintained by wireless from the British warships, lying off Chanak, to Galata Tower, whence it was telephoned to General Harington's headquarters. The message received at about 10 p.m. that evening from Galata Tower was roughly to the following effect: "A Turkish force some 1,500 strong has penetrated the neutral zone and H.M.S. *King George V*, *Centurion*, etc., etc., have proceeded to bombard enemy positions." One could almost imagine that one heard the guns going off. Baird came hurrying back from headquarters, and a few moments later there clattered into the Embassy courtyard a double platoon of the Irish Guards in steel helmets and full battle kit. I spent an hour or two thereafter going round the grounds with Baird and the Irish O.C., the platoon selecting sites for machine-gun emplacements, etc. Only in the morning did enlightenment come, when it was discovered that a mistake had been made in taking down the wireless message from the ships. Instead of ending "have proceeded to bombard enemy positions," the actual text was "have proceeded to their bombarding positions," a very different story. It was a fact, however, that Turkish troops had entered the neutral zone. But on their mistake being politely explained to them, they had hurriedly excused themselves and withdrawn again.

There is a story, too, to be told about that British outpost at Chanak. At the beginning of the trouble Harington had invited Generals Charpy and Mombelli, the French and Italian G.O.C.s, to send detachments there to prove Allied solidarity and to show the Allied flags together. They had willingly agreed to do so, but within two days the charming and honourable French High Commissioner, General Pellé, received a curt order from M. Poincaré, who was then, unluckily for all of us, the French Premier, to the effect that not a single French soldier was to be left on the Asiatic side of the Straits. Pellé, very shamefacedly, for he was a great gentleman, read the gist

of this message to us at a High Commissioners' meeting. Whereupon the Italian High Commissioner, Marquis Garroni, quickly said quite shamelessly that he associated the Italian troops in his French colleague's instructions. Thus the British remained alone on the Asiatic side.

Throughout the crisis and right on to Lausanne it was always the same thing. No sooner had we taken up a position or defined a policy than we found that the French and Italians had ratted on us and retreated far behind us. The French were playing up to Kemal all this time in the most deplorable manner, and trying to win his good graces behind our backs. It did them no good in the end, but at the time it cramped our style, and it was all largely due to the personal antipathy between Poincaré and Lord Curzon.

Luckily in Sir Horace Rumbold H.M. Government had a representative who would take no rot from anybody. Poincaré had sent out to Smyrna on a French warship Franklin Bouillon, a French politician, and President of the French Chamber's Committee for Foreign Affairs, to get into direct touch with Mustapha Kemal. He unexpectedly arrived late one evening at Constantinople on board his warship. He had, he said, an urgent communication to make to the High Commissioners, and General Pellé invited them to come to the French Embassy to hear it. Rumbold at once said that this was impossible, that he was the senior of the High Commissioners, and that he would be very glad to welcome M. Fr. Bouillon that evening after dinner at the British Embassy. Fr. Bouillon pleaded excessive fatigue after his exhausting activities on behalf of the Allies, but Rumbold was obdurate, and the meeting was held at the British Embassy. I confess that I felt a spasm of pity for him when he came in, for everyone else present either wore uniform or a dinner-jacket, while Fr. Bouillon was in a dark suit with a pair of very vivid yellow boots. But Rumbold was quite right. We did not approve of Poincaré's bargaining with Kemal behind our back, and the High Commissioners were the masters of Constantinople, and not a French politician.

The rest of the scene was mostly drama. When asked by Rumbold to be so good as to give us an account of his talks with Kemal, Fr. Bouillon replied that he was so exhausted that he must first ask if someone could give him an aspirin. This and a glass of water

were fetched, while everyone remained silent. Having swallowed his aspirin, Fr. Bouillon gave us an extremely lucid and interesting narrative of his meetings with the Ghazi. But the upshot of the whole story, if I remember rightly, was that if we did not yield to the Turks, there would be war and that the Moslems in India would fight on the same side as their Turkish co-religionaries. Having ended his story, Fr. Bouillon sank back into his chair and asked for another aspirin. And so the meeting ended, after Rumbold had suitably thanked Fr. Bouillon for his very clear account of his activities on our joint behalf and had expressed the earnest hope that he would now enjoy a good night's rest.

For the moment Fr. Bouillon vanished from our stage, but he was destined to return to it when, after two or three days of prolonged discussion, the conference of Generals at Mudania, whither Generals Harington, Charpy, and Mombelli had gone to meet General Ismet, reached a deadlock. The Turks had presented the Allies with an ultimatum, and General Harington as senior Allied General returned to Constantinople to ask for fresh or final instructions. He had arrived late one night, and early the next morning we held a preliminary first meeting at the British Embassy consisting of the High Commissioner, Admiral O. de B. Brock, General Harington, and their staffs. The latter was given his final instructions as received from H.M. Government and at the same time the text of a counter-ultimatum which he was to present to the Turks if there was no agreement. It was to the effect that we would employ all the forces at our command to resist the Turks if they attempted to make any encroachment on our positions on the Asiatic side of the Straits. That being definitely settled, Rumbold and I then received General Pellé and Fr. Bouillon, who were informed of our attitude. Fr. Bouillon threw up his hands in horror and argued volubly on our folly and on the certainty of war if we persisted in it. Whereupon Rumbold asked Pellé to speak to him confidentially alone in the next room. I was left with Fr. Bouillon, who, as soon as the door closed behind the two High Commissioners, jumped up and seizing me by the lapels of my coat said, "Surely you, as a sensible man, can persuade your Chief to be more reasonable." I don't remember exactly what my reply was, but it was to the point, and he quickly let go my coat and sat down again in silence.

The final meeting that morning was a conference of all the Allied High Commissioners, at which Rumbold announced to the two others the terms both of the instructions given to General Harington as well as of the ultimatum which he was to present if the Turks refused to accept our final terms. Both Pellé and Garroni, while agreeing on behalf of their Governments to the general sense of the instructions, announced that neither the French nor the Italian Governments could accept the presentation of our ultimatum to the Turks, and that, consequently, if we fought the Turks, we would have to fight them alone. Poincaré's orders, added General Pellé, were that in no circumstances were the French troops to fire on the Turks. All Rumbold replied was that he took note of this definition of Allied co-operation, but that, so far as we were concerned, General Harington's ultimatum stood. The meeting broke up on that statement and Harington returned by warship that afternoon to Mudania. After another twenty-four hours' debate and an all-night sitting, the Turks accepted our final proposals and a tired but successful Harington reappeared the morning after at dawn.

But if there was one thing which I learnt during my stay in Constantinople it was that coalitions are a snare and a delusion and that it is impossible ever to count on Allies who do not speak the same language or share the same ideals as oneself. I felt this very strongly when I went to Berlin in 1937. If we were not always to be falling between two stools, as we persistently did in the post-war period, then Britain and the British Empire, and if possible the U.S.A., must formulate their own policy and stand pat on it, alone if needs be. Our policy in Europe after the 1914-18 war had been largely subordinated to the French, and I never had any confidence in the system by which France endeavoured to keep Germany in check by means of her alliances with Poland and the Little Entente (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Roumania). I may have been foolish to imagine that there was any prospect at all of the Nazis listening to the voice of reason, but that was certainly not a greater error than those made who believed in the prospect of France being able to maintain her precarious hegemony of Europe.

To my mind, the one hope of preserving peace was to start afresh with a purely British and disinterested policy, in which Germany might see its way or at least be given a chance to co-operate. It



horrified me, for instance, to learn when I got to Berlin that the British Embassy there was popularly regarded as a branch of the French Embassy, and that the notoriously curious Germans when they passed up and down the Wilhelmstrasse and saw the Royal coat-of-arms on the door with its motto of "Dieu et mon Droit" used to say, "Even the British motto is French." I consequently made a point during my first year in Berlin of seeing that my relations with my French colleague, M. François Poncet, were not too intimate. My Chiefs at the Foreign Office were dissatisfied with me in this regard, but I was convinced that it was necessary if the British voice, which was the only one which really counted in Germany, was to be listened to with any vestige of confidence or respect. It would not be if it were regarded as the mere echo of the voice of France.

But I was most of all alive to this unreliability of allies in the middle of May 1940, when I travelled back from France on one of the last boats to be able to leave Havre for Southampton. I found myself in the company of the late Lord Rothermere. He was even more pessimistic than I was in regard to the French capacity to hold out. I asked him if he still personally directed his newspapers. Though his reply was that he did not, I urged him to arrange for their slogan from then onwards to be "Inghilterra fara da se," or in other words, "Britain and the Empire will do the job on their own, alone if needs be." Provided the British Empire and the U.S.A. remain strong and united at heart by the same ideals, there will be no need for H.M. Government in the United Kingdom to tie themselves up in entanglements on the continent of Europe. We cannot disinterest ourselves from that continent—far from it—but we can and should maintain our complete liberty of policy and action and be bound to no other chariot-wheel than our own. The inviolability of France is a British interest, and we should always be prepared to go to her assistance if attacked; but any alliance or treaty engagements with her are superfluous and hampering.

## CHAPTER XV

AT Mudania it had been agreed to hold as soon as possible a Conference at Lausanne between the British, French, and Italian Governments on the one hand, and the Turkish Government on the other, to discuss all the questions at issue between us; or, what it really amounted to, the revision of the Peace Treaty of Sèvres. If we had been wise enough to adopt a similar procedure in respect of the Treaty of Versailles as well as of those with Hungary and Bulgaria, the situation in Europe might be very different to-day. But we did not, and I suspect that a far-seeing Providence knew better than we did what was best for us in the end. Be that as it may, the Sèvres Treaty with Turkey was totally revised at Lausanne, and subsequent events have proved the wisdom of that revision, unpalatable though it seemed at the moment to many people and in particular to the large British colony in the Levant.

Nor was any time lost in completing the arrangements for the holding of the Lausanne Conference, which actually met about the 20th of November 1922. Lord Curzon himself was the chief British delegate, with Sir Horace Rumbold as his second in command. The British delegation was an extremely powerful one, particularly as Lord Curzon took with him that incomparable pair, Sir Eyre Crowe and, as he was then, Sir William Tyrrell, who so long as they worked together in the Foreign Office made that Department the most admirably run and most competent Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the world. Rumbold also took with him his principal Turkish adviser, Andrew Ryan, of whose prescience and ability I have written earlier in this book, and who was to become a delegate himself during the second half of the Conference. I was left behind in Constantinople as acting High Commissioner. I felt very lonely and inadequate as the train steamed out of Sirkedji station with all the three High Commissioners and Ryan on board it. A few months before an entry in my diary had been, "Alas! I am forty, but thank Heaven I don't look it." That evening it was, as I remember well, though all my diaries are now in Switzerland and I may never see them again, "Four-square to the winds that blow."

There was good reason for my uneasiness. The situation in

Constantinople was already disquieting. Owing to a misunderstanding with the military, not only Refet Pasha (who was to represent the Angora Government and was now sitting at the Sublime Porte in the place of old Tewfik Pasha, the head of the Sultan's Government), but a thousand or more of his followers had been allowed to enter the city.

Nevertheless, from that November till September 1924, the next two years were possibly the most interesting of my life. With two short interludes, one of a month when Rumbold came back in between the two halves of the Lausanne Conference, and another for two months when Sir Ronald Lindsay appeared as our first Ambassador to Mustapha Kemal, I remained in charge of British affairs in Turkey. I was called by various names but in practice it was the same. At first I was Acting High Commissioner, then when Lausanne was over and High Commissioners ceased to be I was British representative, and at the last, when Lindsay was appointed, British Chargé d'Affaires. The only difference the name made was in regard to the number of guns one got when one visited a British warship. Acting High Commissioners were treated as full High Commissioners and got nineteen. As British representative there was some doubt in theory and in practice as between seventeen and fifteen, and actually the last time I left a British warship, which was in January 1924 when I took Mr. Stanley Bruce (then Prime Minister of Australia and on his way back there) to visit the vast cemeteries on the Gallipoli peninsula, I got thirteen as a Chargé d'Affaires. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

The first thing I did after Rumbold had left was to establish relations with Refet Pasha, and I was always glad that I did so. He was a slim, dapper little man, intelligent, and sly as they make them, a natural intriguer but with a good deal of decency in his make-up. He afterwards fell out of favour with Angora and was replaced by Adnan Bey and his famous wife Halideh Hanum, but for the next six months Refet was to a considerable extent, though behind the scenes, master of Constantinople; and, since he was working for Angora and not for us, a thorn in our side.

Nor was trouble long in coming. The departure from Constantinople of the High Commissioners and the presence there of Refet and his cut-throats alarmed the Sultan, who sent a message to Harington to the effect that he feared for his life and desired to leave the country.

Arrangements for his evacuation, carried out in the closest secrecy between Ryan's successor as Oriental Secretary and the Sultan's doctor, were quickly made, and very early one November morning Harington and I met at the British naval quay. Two military motor ambulances stopped about the same time outside two of the gates leading into the grounds of the Dolma Bagtsche palace, where the Sultan was in residence. There was a slight drizzle of rain and we were of course both a little anxious lest there might be some hitch in Harington's carefully planned scheme. At the appointed hour a military ambulance drove on to the quay, but when we went forward, thinking to receive the Sultan, out tumbled half a dozen of H.M.'s personal attendants and a great mass of luggage. Yet the Sultan's ambulance car should have started and actually did start ten minutes before the second car. However, all was well, and a very few minutes later up drove the other car, which had come by a more circuitous but possibly safer route, and this time it was the Sultan himself. He got into Harington's motor-boat and we went straight off to H.M.S. *Malaya* (Captain Meyrick), which was waiting with steam up. As soon as we got on board I told the Sultan that he was now safe on British territory, and asked whether there was anything I could do for him and where did he wish to go. He said that he had no plans and would go wherever I suggested. I proposed Malta to him, and he agreed at once; in fact his only preoccupation seemed to be as regards his four wives, whom he had left behind and whom he feared might be exposed to the vengeance of Angora. Both Harington and I promised to do what we could to protect them. We then took leave of H.M. and within a very short while the *Malaya* was on her way into the Sea of Marmora.

I heard later that Refet Pasha was infuriated at what had happened. Not so much at the escape of the Sultan, which was probably regarded as a good riddance, but because he had had not the slightest inkling of it till all was over. A few weeks later the Armenian Patriarch sent us a similar S.O.S. and was equally successfully evacuated.

During those first two or three months there were a number of incidents of one sort or another requiring quick decisions, of which I could only inform the Foreign Office, as in the case of the Sultan's flight, after they had been taken. Never a word did I get from that Department whether it approved or not, a silence which added to my

anxieties. Shortly after the New Year, however, I received by bag a letter from Lord Derby, who was once more Secretary of State for War. Roughly it ran as follows: "As an old colleague of yours I hope you will not think me presumptuous if I tell you what satisfaction it gives me to hear the good opinion expressed by my fellow-members in the Cabinet about your handling of all the difficult questions with which you have to deal in Constantinople." It is impossible for me to describe the encouragement which that kind letter gave me; it just made all the difference, and I have always been grateful to Lord Derby for it. As a matter of fact, I never heard, then or later, whether the Foreign Office approved of my share in the Sultan's rescue or of my selection of Malta as his destination. As I received, however, a C.M.G. in the next Birthday Honours list, I presumed at least that they were generally satisfied.

In the meantime the Lausanne Conference, though handled in masterly fashion by Lord Curzon, was proceeding to a deadlock. To some extent I think that the Marquess, having settled a number of important political points, such as the Armenian question and our War Graves on the Gallipoli Peninsula, began after three months of it to get bored with problems such as the capitulations and economic matters. At all events, he suddenly announced that he would leave in twenty-four hours unless the Turks accepted some condition or other. The latter, a patient folk, refused to be impressed by the special train, which was somewhat ostentatiously ordered, and Lord Curzon and the British delegation had no option but to leave by it. So the Conference broke up, but in an air of unreality, since no one seemed to doubt that it would be reopened.

Ismet Pasha, on his way back to Angora, spent a day or so in Constantinople, and I had two long talks with him. I asked him how he had got on with Lord Curzon. "He treated us like schoolboys," replied Ismet, "but," and his eyes twinkled, "we did not mind. He treated the French and Italians just the same." It was typical both of the Marquess and of the way a Turk would look at it. Certainly Ismet made it clear to me that Lord Curzon had greatly impressed him, which did not surprise me, as I cannot myself conceive of anyone more admirably suited to fill the rôle of Britain's representative abroad.

Lord Curzon may have been a great man, or just failed to be a great man, as one of his critics described him to me, but he certainly

had immense personality. Abroad that counts more than people in England realize. Speaking from my own experience as a diplomat abroad, I know only too well the difference it made, the greater weight it carried, and the more consideration was likely to be given, if one was able in one's talks with foreign Ministers to assert that this, that, or the other were the views of, say, Lord Curzon or Lord Halifax rather than those of some less impressive personage. As Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs H.M. Government should if possible always choose a real personality calculated to impress and influence the foreign mind. Even with H.M. representatives abroad that sort of thing, though obviously of minor importance, also counts. In a sense it is a form of propaganda, the value of which in all respects we are so prone to underestimate.

One discovered, however, an appreciation of the point in curious places. I recollect Mr. Tom Shaw, who was at the time Secretary of State for War in the second Labour Government, coming to France to unveil a memorial at Amiens. Incidentally, he astounded the French by making his speech there in their own language and by quoting something out of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* about a Bishop of Amiens of which most of the Frenchmen were themselves ignorant. He came on to Paris that evening and dined with me, as I happened to be at the moment in charge of the Embassy. He told us how he had first taken up the study of foreign languages after having attended a Labour Conference in Berlin and having realized how handicapped he was by knowing no other tongue but his own. Having no money to buy books, he had got hold of a Dutch grammar at some free library and so had learnt Dutch first of all. Then German and French, and he was now, he told us, studying Italian. He was a remarkable man and honest-to-God Labour. It was a men's dinner, and he kept us all interested till he left at midnight. I was personally immensely impressed by him, and I remember thinking how gladly I would serve a Labour Government if all its Ministers were like him, real common-sense Labour and less idealistic Socialist intelligentsia.

But the point of this story is that he astonished me in the course of the evening by suddenly remarking to me, "I suppose you find it very useful to be tall and presentable-looking in the Diplomatic Service?" I replied that it did put one a lap or two ahead at the start, though only at the start, since without brains a mere façade would

achieve little. "A good appearance," I said, "is an asset just like intelligence, though one had even less cause to be proud of the first than of the second, which could at least be improved by one's personal efforts and by application and study. Both were gifts from God or from one's parents, and though intelligence counted most in the long run, physical qualities were not to be despised because of the good start which they gave one." Mr. Shaw agreed, and I have always remembered that observation of his. It struck me as curious coming from a Labour man, and it may have been naïve, but it was sense.

Sometime in April Rumbold returned to Constantinople, and I took the opportunity to snatch a fortnight's leave in England, the last except for the inside of a week that I was to get till September of the following year, as the Conference reopened almost immediately at Lausanne and Rumbold went back there, this time as chief British delegate, taking once more Ryan with him. We were still far from being out of the wood; the Turks were constantly trying it on and incidents of one sort or another were frequent. A serious one arose early that summer when the Turkish representative suddenly presented the three High Commissioners with a note from the Angora Government that all foreign warships over 1,000 tons must leave Smyrna harbour and could not be allowed to enter it in future. My French and Italian colleagues accepted this ultimatum, but I returned my note to Adnan Bey saying that I could not receive it, and adding that I had telegraphed to Lord Curzon suggesting that another British cruiser in addition to the one already in the harbour should be sent to Smyrna. I got an immediate reply from the Marquess to the effect that I should inform the Turkish Government that a cruiser of some 10,000 tons would be entering Smyrna Bay at 7 a.m. the following morning. I gave this communication late the same evening to Adnan Bey, who was in a great state of mind about it and assured me that the ship would certainly be fired upon by the Turkish shore batteries. In which case I told him that the cruiser would assuredly return their fire. Poor Adnan Bey, he sat up all that night talking to Angora over the direct telegraph line; but in the morning no cruiser appeared. There had been a hitch in London. The Admiralty had got the wind up about midnight and had got into touch with the resident Secretary at the Foreign Office. Lord Curzon wasn't to be found and the instructions to the warship were cancelled. But when the Marquess

turned up the next morning there was hell to pay, and I received another telegram saying that owing to foggy weather the entry of the British warship into Smyrna harbour had had to be postponed till the following morning at the same hour. So the whole performance had to be repeated. I spent another uneasy day, since the Turks were perfectly capable of opening fire, and Adnan spent another night on the telegraph line. Fortunately all went according to plan the next morning. A British merchant vessel coming out of the harbour signalled to the British cruiser the exact position of the Turkish mine-fields, and she entered the harbour at full speed and anchored opposite the forts without a pistol being fired at her, which was as well, as behind the cruiser just out of sight over the horizon were two British battleships, ready to come to her support if she were attacked.

Perhaps it was a risk, but it seemed to me that if we were to come out of the Lausanne Conference with any credit at all we must at all costs keep a very stiff upper lip in Constantinople, and prove to the Turks that we were not going to take any bluff from them. It was with the same object in view that we made a little coup of our own shortly afterwards. The Turks had undertaken to send no guns to eastern Thrace, but they had not kept their word. Harington's intelligence service learnt that a number of these guns which had been surreptitiously introduced into Thrace were now being secretly withdrawn again on board a Turkish steamer. Harington, Brock, and I held a meeting and decided that a destroyer should stop this vessel on the high seas, bring it, if the guns were on board, to Constantinople as lawful prize, and confiscate the weapons themselves. It was a somewhat high-handed performance since, after all, the guns were being re-exported from and not being imported into eastern Thrace. None the less, on the principle that it was necessary to take the offensive, as soon as I learnt that all had gone well, that the guns were on board and that the ship was safely on its way to Haidar Pasha, I hurried off to see Adnan and reproached him violently with his breach of a Turkish undertaking. I told him that I could only let H.M. Government know the full circumstances of the case. And that was the last we ever heard of it, the guns being restored a few months later to the Turks when the Allied forces left Constantinople for good.

Another thing which we used to do if we thought the Turk was getting a bit above himself in Constantinople was to ask the Air Force



to give a demonstration. Peregrine Fellowes was O.C. the R.A.F. in Turkey, and a better comrade-in-arms one could not ask for. He was always ready to oblige, and we had some very comforting flying in force and just over the tops of the houses of Constantinople. The Turks had had a terrible hammering from the R.A.F. in Palestine in 1918, and I believe that those Air Force stunts were more effective than anything in keeping the Turks quiet till Lausanne was over.

There were, indeed, plenty of thrills during that year of Lausanne to give a zest to life, particularly if one was in the early forties. The work was hard and incessant and the responsibility great, but there were many compensations. For a diplomat the novelty of co-operation with a large British Navy and Army was extraordinarily interesting, and it would be idle to pretend that I did not get a considerable kick out of the pomp-and-vanity side of the position which I held, thanks to Rumbold's absence. Fortunately my sense of humour enabled me to laugh at myself and never to be unduly impressed by my own importance. But it was not unexhilarating when one went to a military display to be received by the National Anthem on one's arrival on the ground, to have guards turn out when one went to Harington's headquarters, and still more so when one went down the Bosphorus in the *Makook* from Yenikevy to Constantinople to meet friends or acquaintances who chanced to come out and visit one, to return with the High Commissioner's flag flying and see every British and Allied warship pipe to stations and dress ship as one passed.

The *Makook* was a joy in itself. She was an eighty-ton boat with a crew of seven or eight, and though slow and so flat-bottomed as to be almost dangerous in any sort of rough weather, she was admirably suited for short cruises to the Marmora or the Black Sea. Every Sunday throughout the summer I used to invite twenty or thirty people to join me on board her for a trip to the Black Sea, where there were marvellous sand beaches for bathing. There we used to anchor about 100 yards off the shore and swim to the beach, to be followed by the faithful Osman with tea. If we were farther from the shore than that, I used to have the boat with the tea follow behind me, lest I got into difficulties. I was always nervous of water. Luckily I never did get into trouble, for I feel sure that if I had, Osman, who always

insisted on sitting in the stern of the boat in full uniform, and who could not swim, would have at once plunged into the water to rescue me.

When the quail were in I used to take the *Makook* down to the Marmora where the birds were thickest, and spend an hour or two at dawn and dusk shooting. The pleasantest trip of that kind which I ever had was just before the final evacuation. My companions on that occasion were the Commercial Secretary, Colonel Harold Woods, and the unfortunate Barry Domville, who was then Chief of Staff to Admiral Brock. Himself an Admiral, and the son of another distinguished Admiral, "Monkey" Domville, nothing short of irrefutable proof will ever make me believe that Barry was, or ever could be, capable of any act helpful to Germany or contrary to British interests. He was certainly a whole-hearted partisan of Anglo-German co-operation, which, if it were possible, is an obviously desirable aim, and he ran a newspaper or periodical called *The Link*—of which I never saw a copy myself, but which I suppose had some sort of circulation—which propagandized to that effect. That may well be, but that he lifted a little finger against Britain is to me inconceivable.

Be that as it may, I shall never forget that three-days' trip with him and Harold Woods. I took my French cook with me and plenty of beer and champagne. The Marmora is full of fish, and the bouillabaisse that the cook made us is still a memory, as well as the freshly killed quail spatchcocked in vine leaves. Late one afternoon we started off and dropped anchor in a bay near Makrievy. The first morning was a failure and we got only about a dozen birds altogether. But there was a big flight of quail in the night, and the next morning in three hours we got about 180, and shot until we were tired. I had promised Admiral Brock that I would bring Domville back to his flagship by midday at latest on the following day. This meant that we could manage only about an hour's shooting the next morning. Even so we got between seventy and eighty birds, and by a quarter to noon I had deposited Domville on the deck of the *Iron Duke* with a sackful of quail for his shipmates.

After each morning's shoot, when we were hot and dusty, and as soon as we got back to the *Makook*, we used to dive off the deck into about twenty feet of absolutely transparent water. That in itself was a joy. Then followed an enormous lunch, quantities to drink, and

sleep and swapping stories the rest of the afternoon. I remember one story Barry told me which I have since told scores of times. An American had been boasting one day in the Shanghai bar of his marvellous prowess in shooting. This became so boring that at last a Scot who was sitting in a corner said, "All very interesting, but nothing to what happened once to me." "What was that?" said the American. "Well," replied the Scot, "I wanted to shoot snipe last year in a marsh in Manchuria. They told me there were a lot of snipe, but that there was some danger as tigers, too, occasionally frequented the marsh. So, to be on the safe side, I took a paradox gun with me and loaded one barrel with bullet and the other with No. 8 shot. I had not gone very far before a snipe got up, and of course I forgot which barrel I had loaded with which, and I'm blowed if I didn't shoot off its head with the bullet. It fell in a clump of bushes, and just as I was stooping to pick it up, out jumped a tiger and came straight for me." "Huh!" said the American very superciliously, "I suppose you are going to tell us that you killed the tiger with snipe shot?" "No such luck," replied the Scot, "the beggar ate me!"

At long last in the late summer agreement on all points, except the Mosul oilfields, was reached with the Turks at Lausanne, and the treaty was signed. Rumbold having been appointed British Ambassador in Madrid did not return to Turkey, and I stayed on in Constantinople. It was the closing chapter of an occupation which had lasted for just five years, a little bit longer than the war itself. All that now remained to do was to prepare for the evacuation of all the Allied troops and ships, which was fixed for the middle of October.

In all matters requiring organization Tim Harington was supreme, and all the arrangements made for the evacuation of the British Army was superlatively good. Among other things Harington was a deeply religious man, and two ceremonies which preceded the evacuation are worth recalling. The first was the consecration of the British flag which had been flown at H.Q. throughout the occupation with a view to its being hung in the Crimean Church in Constantinople, together with the battle-flags of that war. Harington asked me to participate with him in this ceremony, which I gladly agreed to do. I would have liked him to place the flag himself upon the altar, but the parson of the church insisted on receiving the flag from Harington

and laying it there himself. We argued the point, but the priest won, much to my regret. The church was packed with soldiers, and after the priest had placed the flag upon the altar, Harington and I went up and received the Communion. It was a very simple but at the same time affecting ceremony.

The second was the unveiling of a monument in the Crimean cemetery at Haidar Pasha to the sailors and soldiers who had died during the five years' occupation of Constantinople. That had its humorous side as, though the initiative was entirely Harington's, Admiral Brock, as C.-in-C. the senior Service, insisted on his right to do the actual unveiling. As neither would give in to the other, they came round to the Embassy and asked me, as the civil authority, to do the actual unveiling. It was not the first occasion on which the naval and military chiefs, who were not particularly sympathetic to each other, had come round to have their disputes settled by myself, who was ten years the junior of both of them. So, in the event, with Harington on one side of me and Brock on the other, it was I who actually pulled the cord which unveiled the monument. As it happens, the monument itself was in a corner of the cemetery shut off by a row of cypress trees, and away from and out of sight of the naval and military detachments and of the spectators; and when the account of the ceremony was published in the *Orient News* it was stated that the General had done the unveiling. So the joke was on the Admiral after all.

For the last few days of the occupation General and Lady Harington and two of their A.D.C.s came and stayed with me at the Embassy while Headquarters were being packed up, and I gave a series of luncheon and dinner parties to the French and Italian Generals and the British colony. The closing event was a dinner of about thirty-six, which was all the dining-room at the Embassy would hold, to all the British naval captains and battalion commanders left in Constantinople. Harington made a long speech, and I replied at almost equal length. I remember Walter Baird coaching me till I was word perfect. Harington and I scratched each other's backs good and proper, but it was a very successful party and the cook was in his best form.

The final ceremony took place in the square by the mosque at Dolme Baghtche. Detachments of British, French, and Italian troops formed two sides of it, Turkish troops the third, the High Com-

missioners, diplomatic body, and foreign spectators the fourth. Behind the soldiers was a great crowd of Turks. Harington being, of course, busy with his own men, I told him that I would look after Lady Harington and bring her to the General's motor-boat, which was moored to the quay just beside the mosque, and which would then take the three of us to the *Arabic*, on which they were to make the journey to England. For once I took Osman's brother Achmet with me in my car. He was nearly as big as Osman and more active, and it was lucky I did so. I left the car in the courtyard of the mosque, and Lady Harington and I walked from there about a hundred yards to our place on the fourth side of the square. The ceremony itself took nearly an hour, and consisted chiefly in the mutual saluting of each other's flags. When that was over, the Allied troops moved off down the street to the naval quay about a mile away, where they embarked. The Italians led the way, followed by the French, in absolute silence. But the British colour party had been carefully chosen by Harington from the Guards battalions, and of its hundred men not one was less than 6 ft. 1 in. Moreover, it was preceded by the band of the Irish Guards. It was a magnificent spectacle and was altogether too much for the resentful but military-minded Turkish crowds, who, as it happened, hated us at that moment worse than any of the Allies. The whole way to its point of embarkation the British colour party was vociferously cheered by the Turks, who have never been anything else throughout their history but a great military race. They just could not help themselves, but it was an astonishing thing to happen all the same.

As the last of the British detachment left the square, the vast mass of Turks behind them poured into it. I told Lady Harington that if we did not make a dash for it at once we would never get to the General's boat. So I put one arm round her waist and the other over the breast pocket in which I kept my pocket-book and we started to run. But we had hardly got ten yards when we were surrounded and helpless. At that moment there towered up beside me the faithful Achmet. With his arms going like flails and utterly regardless of what damage he did, he cleared a path like magic through the crowd, and we walked sedately down to the mosque. How Achmet got there I do not know. I had been in the front row and behind me were packed diplomats and press men and a horde of other civilians. He

must have been watching like a lynx, and when he saw me start off nothing was going to stop him from seeing to my safety and convenience. Such are the Albanians when they have learnt to know and trust one. The Italian High Commissioner was less well looked after and less fortunate. He tried to do the same as I did. When he did reach the quayside ten minutes after I had got there, he had lost his hat and his pocket-book, his coat was torn and his collar crumpled, and he looked a picture of misery.

I lunched on board the s.s. *Arabic* with the Haringtons, and half an hour before the long procession of warships and troopships got under weigh I said good-bye and went on board the *Makook*, which was waiting for me alongside. I took Colonel Baird with me, and instead of returning to shore we steamed down past Seraglio Point into the Sea of Marmora and waited there for the procession to start. When it did so we turned round and steamed back to Constantinople, passing as close as possible alongside the Allied vessels. It was a bit dramatic, but it was an emotional twenty-four hours. They were going home and we were going back to a city in which the wind was blowing like a tornado and in which no one quite knew what the Turks would do when once more in undisputed possession of it. Everyone was buying fezzes there now; so much so that the supply had run out. All the way along the line we were vociferously cheered, and especially so by the Guards battalions, who were on the *Arabic* with Harington. The last of the procession was a British battleship flying the flag of Admiral Watson. Her band was on deck and played the salute as we went under her stern. In a few seconds we would have passed, and instead of remaining at attention as I should have done, I just could not help waving good-bye to the Admiral, who was standing by the band. Quick as a flash he turned to the band, which broke off the salute and switched to "Auld Lang Syne," and it was to that tune that I said farewell to the British forces of occupation. Nor was that all. As we were coming alongside the quay we passed the American High Commissioner's yacht (the *Archimedes*, I think its name was). Never before had it paid the slightest attention to the British High Commissioner's flag. But there, too, emotion was the order of the day, for as we went by what should her band do but play the British National Anthem!

That was the end of our five years' occupation of Constantinople,

and as Baird and I drove back to the Embassy we felt somewhat forlorn. Not that I shared the general apprehension as to the attitude of the Turks towards the city's cosmopolitan population now that the Allied troops and police were gone, but my co-operation with both our soldiers and sailors had been very close and intimate, and I knew that I would miss them greatly. When we got back to the Embassy we learnt two interesting facts, which looked like ominous incidents. As soon as the British flag was hauled down at the naval quay, the Turks had hoisted an immense Turkish flag in its place. It was apparently too heavy for the halliards and split from top to bottom just as the *Arabic* came opposite the quay on her way down to the Marmora. Nor was that all. Another equally large Turkish flag had been hoisted at the corner of the Grande Rue de Pera and of a street leading to the British Embassy. It, too, drooped under its own weight, got caught in the overhead tram wires, and was burnt up. *Absit omen*, but I recollect being somewhat impressed at the time, and I wondered how long the Turks would remain in possession of the city which so many others coveted.

I spent most of the next day driving round the streets of Constantinople, with Osman in uniform beside the chauffeur and the British flag flying at the bonnet of the car, in an attempt to put a little heart into the frightened populace. But as a matter of fact I do not recollect any particular instances of victimization. All of those who had serious reason to be afraid of Turkish reprisals had been got safely away before the occupation ended. There may have been cases of which one was unaware, but generally speaking the attitude of the Angora authorities to what was no longer the capital of Turkey was unexceptionable and in a very short time conditions in the city were completely normal again. My own job, too, had become that of the ordinary diplomat accredited to a foreign Government, except that I lived in Constantinople and had no direct touch with the Government at Angora. I did ask the Foreign Office to be allowed to go to Angora with a view to settling the Mosul oil question direct with Kemal, whose acquaintance I was desperately anxious to make. But I am afraid that the Foreign Office had no faith in my capacity to achieve a settlement of this rather thorny subject, though it ascribed its refusal to authorize my visit on the ground that it feared that I should not be treated with proper respect there!

I shall always regret never having met Mustapha Kemal—in fact I saw him only once and then at a great distance. I was rung up early one Friday morning that autumn by Adnan Bey, who told me that the Ghazi Pasha was arriving at Haidar Pasha at noon, and would be coming up the Bosphorus in the afternoon on board a destroyer in order to visit some of the Black Sea ports. Normal relations being now re-established between us, he asked me whether I could instruct the British merchant captains in the harbour to dress their ships in honour of the Ghazi's visit. As it happened, the Turkish Government had just decreed that henceforth Fridays, instead of Sundays, should be the weekly holiday throughout Turkey. I consequently told Adnan that, while it would be quite impossible for me to get hold of the British captains on a Friday and weekly holiday morning, I would myself hoist in the Ghazi's honour a very very large British flag on the Yenikevy Embassy (which flew otherwise only a small one). I added that I imagined that the Ghazi had not seen a British flag for a long time and that I felt sure he would appreciate this token of goodwill. Adnan was not very pleased, but the Turks have a sense of humour and he could scarcely demur. Anyway, I did what I said I would do, and I would add that the British flag in question was the largest one I have ever seen. At Yenikevy the Bosphorus broadens out into the Bay of Beicos, which runs deep into the Asiatic side. As a rule vessels coming up the stream would keep fairly near the middle but closer to the European than to the Asiatic side. Not this time, however. As soon as the half-dozen small warships which escorted the Ghazi turned the point which brought them into full view of Yenikevy and my flag, they sheered abruptly off to the east and went right round the Bay of Beicos, hugging closely the Asiatic side. They were so far off that I do not know whether I actually picked out the Ghazi or not. He was apparently not so anxious as all that to get a close view of the Union Jack.

Nevertheless, I often found it useful in my dealings with the Turk, provided it were in matters of not too great political importance, to treat a difficult question with humour rather than with diplomatic stuffiness. A case in point was that of the weapons carried by the cavasses. When the capitulations were abolished, the Turkish Government decided that these weapons, a revolver and sword, were a relic of the capitulations and henceforward should not be worn out-



side an Embassy. The French and Italians agreed, but I absolutely refused to admit the right of the Turkish Government to interfere with the garb and equipment of my servants. I told Adnan Bey that now there was once more a Turkish Ambassador in London, H.M. Government would not object if he went out in his motor-car followed by a couple of camels, each bearing a machine gun. To tell the truth, I simply could not bear to think of the feelings of Osman and Achmet if they were deprived of the scimitars and revolvers which they had worn in the service of the British Embassy for nearly forty years. I knew these weapons had got to go some time, but, if possible, not as long as I was in Constantinople. Nor did they. Adnan was constantly raising the question and complaining that I treated it as a joke, but I stuck to my guns and scimitars, and so long as I remained in Turkey nothing happened. I just could not let my loyal Albanians down.

After the thrills of the past two years, my last year in Constantinople was a mere anti-climax. I still loved bossing the magnificent palace at Pera and the summer residence at Yenikevy and the dear old *Makook*, but there were no more exciting incidents or emotions to get a kick out of. There was, however, an occasional interesting visitor, one of the first being Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. I had learnt through secret sources that he was coming out and, as he had been somewhat violently attacking my Chief about this time in the House of Commons, I thought it as well to telegraph to the Private Secretary at the Foreign Office to the effect that, as head of H.M.'s Opposition in the House, I proposed to treat him with every civility. To this Lord Curzon sent a reply that he entirely agreed.

Mr. MacDonald duly arrived, accompanied by Mr. (afterwards Lord) Arnold, and having very correctly called and written his name in the Embassy book I at once asked him to come and see me. At that time practically my only knowledge of Ramsay MacDonald was that he had been a conscientious objector in the war. I was therefore not prepared to be more than civil. I asked him first what he was doing in Turkey. His answer was that since the Lausanne Treaty would have to be debated in the House of Commons, he, as leader of the Opposition, had come out with a view to acquiring first-hand knowledge of his subject. It was a reply which completely disarmed me and banished all the prejudices I may have felt against conscientious objectors.

Thereafter, we got on like a house on fire. I told him that I wished that a great many more M.P.s would follow his shining example, and I asked him whether I could help him in any way. He replied that there were a number of points which he would like to raise with me, but a formal visit was hardly an occasion for this, since I was probably busy. Could he, he asked, come again at a time when I would be less occupied? I at once invited him to tea the same afternoon and had two hours' conversation with him which I shall never forget. His questions about Lausanne and the situation in Turkey took up but a small part of the time. He then switched to internal politics in Britain, and I sat enthralled, for I was profoundly ignorant of them. Afterwards he may have fallen a victim to vanity, that commonest of traps for the feet of men holding great positions, but at that time I was deeply impressed by his sincerity and straightforwardness and his thoroughly British outlook. He stressed all the mistakes which the Baldwin Government was making, and told me that I would see a Labour Government in power within three months. It was then the end of October 1923. I thought it so impossible that I could not help laughing, but, of course, events proved him right.

After that talk he and Arnold came several times to dinner with me at the Embassy, and I think that he was probably quite helpful to me and my work in his contacts with the Turks. When Lindsay arrived as Ambassador in the following February I slipped over to London for a few days with the bag. In that first Labour Government MacDonald was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as well as Prime Minister, and when I went to the Foreign Office, though I did not ask for an interview, he insisted on seeing me as "the man who had been so kind to him in Constantinople"! I remember his saying to me then that the mistakes of which he had spoken to me in Constantinople were nothing like those which Mr. Baldwin had made afterwards.

A few years later, when Labour took office for the second time, I happened to be in London again. I was lunching with Vansittart and went round to Downing Street, where he had his offices at that time, to fetch him. Vansittart told me that he could not get away till Ramsay MacDonald and his new Cabinet returned from Windsor, whither they had gone to kiss hands. They were, however, expected almost immediately and would I mind waiting in his room till they had come and gone again? I said I would rather sit in the hall, in

order to have a look at the new Government, and I did so. I knew none of them till Ramsay MacDonald himself came in last of all. I naturally jumped up and shook him by the hand and congratulated him. He looked rather vaguely at me and quickly slipped by me and disappeared into the Cabinet-room. A minute or two later the door quietly reopened and Maurice Hankey peeped round the corner of it. When he saw me still sitting on the sofa of the hall he shut the door behind him and, coming up to me, said, "Oh, it's you, is it?" I said, "Yes, why?" "Well," Hankey replied, "the Prime Minister told me that he had seen someone in the hall whose face he seemed to know. He thought it was Arthur Henderson's son, but he asked me to find out." At any rate Ramsay MacDonald had got the name, by some confusion of thought, right!

Not that I ever felt resentment, vexing though it is, at not being recognized by the great. I am far too miserable an offender in that respect myself. I could never remember either names or faces. In January 1924 George Lloyd, on his return from his very successful governorship of Bombay, came to visit me at Constantinople and stayed three or four days in the Embassy with me. I had known him all my life, as he had been at Eton with me, and though two or three years older than I, his great friend at school, Sam Cockerell, had been at my house and I had constantly seen him there. With Lloyd was his Military Secretary from Bombay, Captain Carmichael. Scarcely two months later, during the few days I was in London with a Foreign Office bag, I went to the theatre with Percy Loraine, who was on leave from Persia, where he was then Minister. In the *entr'acte* a man came up to me and said, "I did not know you were back in London, sir." I thought I knew his face, but the "sir" made me think that he was one of the officers from Harington's army, who naturally all addressed one so. As I looked rather blankly at him he said, "You don't seem to remember me. I'm Carmichael." A man who had been stopping in my house as a guest only two months before! But that was not the worst of it. He saw Percy standing and smoking a cigarette a few yards away and asked me if it wasn't Sir Percy Loraine. When I said it was, he remarked that several years before he had paid, with his chief, George Lloyd, a short visit to Loraine on board the ship in which he was travelling to Persia. So up he went to Percy and said, "You won't remember me, Sir Percy." Without

a moment's hesitation Percy answered, "Oh yes, I do. You're Carmichael." I never felt so ashamed in my life.

I had had a similar experience the other way round with Mr. Arthur Balfour during the Peace Conference in Paris. As Secretary of State he was my supreme chief, though his work was at the Conference and mine in the Embassy. Nevertheless I used to meet him frequently at the Embassy and elsewhere. One evening we were both guests at a party in a private house. I happened to leave last of all and found in the cloakroom a very smart black Lincoln & Bennett squash hat instead of the very battered article which I used to wear and which I had bought five years before in Rome. It had, *nota bene*, "*Viva Italia*" printed large on the band inside it. Next morning our host of the night before rang me up on the 'phone and asked if by any chance I had taken away a hat which did not belong to me. I answered that I certainly had, since it was the only one left and someone else had taken mine, that, incidentally, the Lincoln & Bennett one fitted me perfectly and that I hoped never to discover the owner of it. I was told in reply that it was Mr. Balfour who had taken away my hat and that it would be restored to me on receipt of his own. Now, it happened that that very same evening I dined at the Ritz with Lady Hadfield: a *partie carée*, the other guests being another lady and Mr. Balfour. As we were moving into dinner I said to my chief, "I was terribly sorry to hear this morning that you had discovered that you had gone away with the wrong hat last night. I infinitely preferred your Lincoln & Bennett to my own." "Oh," said Mr. Balfour, "it was your hat which I took by mistake, was it?" At dinner the conversation was of course general, and when we were going out of the dining-room (as my hostess told me afterwards) Mr. Balfour whispered to Lady Hadfield, "Who on earth is that Italian who talks English so well?"

Another visitor to Constantinople was Leo Amery, who came out as First Lord of the Admiralty to inspect the Fleet. During his few days there he asked me if I could arrange an interview for him with the Caliph. When the Sultan fled from Constantinople, the next eldest member of the house of Othman was installed as Caliph but not as Sultan, the girding of the sword of Othman round his waist being ostentatiously omitted from the ceremony. The Caliphate, too, was to be abolished a year later, but I expect that the Ghazi Pasha, who

never made a second step until his first foot was firmly planted on the ground, considered that the abolition of the Sultanate was as much as his people could swallow at a time. Anyway, I fixed it up for Amery, though I did not attend the interview myself. The conversation began in French, but in the middle of it, to the Caliph's great amazement, Amery switched to Turkish, which he had learnt years before but which he still spoke perfectly. It was a Turk, not Amery himself, who related this to me.

Another visitor of note just before I left Constantinople—as I thought on leave, but as it turned out for good—was Admiral Lord Beatty, who arrived in his yacht with a bevy of fair ladies and young men on board. Now, sailors as a rule are very punctilious, but Beatty, who had anchored off Therapia, about a mile from the Embassy summer residence at Yenikevy, was in no sort of hurry to come and pay his respects to H.M. Representative. He did, however, eventually turn up, and though I did not feel particularly pleased with him, I asked him and his party to dinner at the Embassy, which they accepted. I asked a Turk or two, and some of the foreign Ambassadors to meet them. At about eight in the morning of the day of the party a picket-boat came alongside Yenikevy Embassy with a note for me from Lord Beatty. In it he said that neither he nor Lady Beatty nor any of his party could come and dine that night; that they wanted to go to some show at Prinkipo and that he found that his yacht, under Turkish regulations, could not steam down the Bosphorus at night into the Marmora. So he would have to go down to Prinkipo before the dinner, instead of afterwards as he had intended to do.

That was all, and it was just a little bit more than I could stand. I told the picket-boat to wait, and as soon as I was dressed I went in person to Beatty's yacht. He was slightly at a disadvantage as he and his party were draped round the deck of the yacht with very little on except bathing towels. I told him that I simply could not accept his getting out of my dinner, at any rate so far as he himself and Lady Beatty were concerned, and that in view of the persons I had invited to meet him I must insist on his coming. The rest of his party could go to Prinkipo if they liked. Now, Beatty was certainly a bully, and where he could bully he did, but he was also Admiral of the Fleet and a gentleman. He saw the point, and at once agreed to come to the

dinner. I then said that if they liked I would send the whole party down to Prinkipo in the *Makook*, which was not subject to the same regulations as private vessels. That, too, was of course enthusiastically accepted by the rest of his party. And in the end it was a thoroughly agreeable evening. Beatty and his ladies got a very good dinner, and after it they all left on the *Makook* under the charge of Mack, one of the Embassy Secretaries, and the super-excellent lady secretary and principal social organizer of the Embassy, Miss Irene Boyle. I heard afterwards that the *Makook* got back about five in the morning and that a good time had been had by all. During the rest of his stay and the only time that I happened to meet him afterwards Beatty was extremely civil and friendly to me.

Another very distinguished visitor in January 1924 was Mr. Stanley Bruce, now Australian High Commissioner in London. At that time he was Prime Minister of Australia and on his way back there. As already related, he was anxious before returning to visit the cemeteries on the Gallipoli Peninsula, where so many of the gallant A.E.F. lay buried. Though, under the Lausanne Treaty, foreign warships were not allowed to pass through the Straits, I managed, for the first time that it ever happened, to get special permission from Angora for a light cruiser to come up to Constantinople and take him down there, and I accompanied him myself. It was a most interesting trip, and among the many things we discussed was the best method of arranging for young Australians to join the British Diplomatic Service. But all his talk was worth careful attention, for I have never met anyone more level-headed and with more common sense than he had. Unless it were Mr. Menzies, who was Australian Prime Minister when the present war started. I met him in Berlin, which he visited a couple of months before the Munich crisis. He was then Attorney-General of Australia. I had several very long talks with him alone at the Embassy, and all I can say is that if there are many others like him and Mr. Bruce in that Dominion, Australia is fortunate. Both had a breadth of vision which seems, since the first World War ended, to have become a lost quality in England.

I left H.M.S. *Calypso* at the Dardanelles and returned by the ordinary steamer to Constantinople. Sir Ronald Lindsay arrived a few weeks later as H.M. Ambassador, and I reverted to my ordinary rank as Counsellor. Lindsay, however, had merely come for a look-see, and

after a couple of months went back to London to marry, as his second wife, Miss Elizabeth Hoyt and have a prolonged honeymoon. So I had one last summer on my own in the Yenikevy Residence on the Bosphorus. It was pleasant enough, but I had fallen from my high estate and I admit that I regretted it. Colonel Baird, too, who was my great friend, had sent in his papers and left the Army for good, and I was lonely—the kind of loneliness which leads one into mischief. However, as an exception, and in consideration of the little leave which I had had during the past two and a half years, I had been granted five months' leave on full pay, and I looked forward greatly to that. In the end Lindsay was in no hurry definitely to take up his new post, and I did not get away till September 18th, which was upsetting for me as my mother, my elder brother, and I had combined to take a shooting in Scotland (Corriemonie) that autumn. I therefore missed the grouse, though I came in for the stags, and in those days stalking was the sport which appealed to me most.

But, as Fate willed it, I did not get my five months or even half of them. I had managed to arrange a series of invitations to shooting-parties and had secured my brother-in-law's butler, Warrior, as a loader and was having a great time. Towards the end of November I was staying for a week's shooting at Harlaxton, near Grantham. The ideas of my host, Mr. Pearson-Gregory, on geography were somewhat vague, and at breakfast on the Saturday morning on which I was leaving for London he said to me, "I see in the paper that the Sirdar, Sir Lee Stack, has been murdered in Cairo, and I suppose that will upset your plans." I replied, "Oh no; Cairo has nothing to do with Constantinople." But he was right and I was wrong.

I was supposed to be staying that week-end with Vansittart and his first wife in their little house near London, and we had arranged that I should pick him up at the Foreign Office. When I got there about six in the evening I went first into the Private Secretary's room, where I was greeted by Walford Selby with the words, "Oh, there you are at last. We have been telephoning all over England trying to find you. You are to go to Cairo at once." The fact of the matter was that H.M. Government, after Stack's murder, had decided to send someone from London to explain personally its views to the High Commissioner. As I happened to be available, and on leave, I had been selected for this very invidious task. So that was that.

I had a long talk with Sir Austen Chamberlain and Crowe that evening, caught a late train to Sedgwick to collect some clothes, had another hour or so's coaching from Chamberlain and Crowe on the Monday morning, and left that evening for Trieste to catch the Lloyd Triestino for Alexandria. There was no flying to Egypt in those days (1924). As it happened, I learnt almost more in two chance remarks by Willie Tyrrell and Selby than I did in my several hours' conversations with the Secretary and Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I had been given the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary to strengthen my position at Cairo. Tyrrell said to me, "It's to gild the pill." Selby's hint to me was, "For goodness' sake do not lose your temper with Allenby." As I had no idea at that time of the reception I was going to get at Cairo, I was inclined to treat both these observations as superfluous when they were made, but I was reminded of them as soon as I reached my new post.



## CHAPTER XVI

IN 1924 it took about five days to get from London via Trieste to Alexandria, and the only news which I received during the voyage was a courteous wireless from the High Commissioner inviting me to stay with him at the Residency on arrival. I had consequently no inkling of the spate of telegrams which passed between the Foreign Office and Lord Allenby, in which the latter, after protesting against, and objecting in the most vigorous terms to, my appointment, finally tendered his resignation in the event of my nomination being upheld. I never even read them when I did reach Cairo, except the last of all from the Foreign Office, which ended with the sentence, "We confidently anticipate that you will receive Mr. H. with all due respect"!

It was one of the things which I regretted most in my life, and never ceased to regret, that I had been the unwilling cause of Lord Allenby's resignation. He was a great soldier and a great gentleman, and I admired and respected him immensely as such. I served him as his second-in-command for nearly six months, and at the end of that time, though he persisted to the end in calling me the Minister Plenipotentiary, we were, I think, good friends, and I believe that he had complete confidence in me.

Many years later and just before he died, he came out to the Argentine when I was Ambassador there to catch the land-locked salmon which thrive in the waters at the foot of the Andes. He stayed with me at the Embassy and I took him down in a special train (a forty-eight-hours' trip) to Baraloeche and the River Traful, and got some satisfaction out of the thought that he would not have done this if he had borne me personally any ill-will. Nor did I ever regard him as being really responsible for those telegrams about my appointment. In one respect he was quite right. It had been a great mistake to give me at that moment the rank of a Minister Plenipotentiary and to blazon it abroad. It made the Egyptians think that, if I was not coming out actually to replace him, I would be at least in a position to override his authority. That impression he had every cause to resent. At the same time at the Residency itself it was no novelty. The Number Two in Cairo generally was a Minister Plenipotentiary, and Ernest Scott had held that position up to a year or eighteen months before. I always

felt that it was others and not the Field-Marshal who objected to my coming to Cairo. Lord Allenby had fully earned his great reputation as a soldier and, in Egypt, as he told me himself, he was content for others to do the work for him.

My steamer reached Alexandria late on a December afternoon. For the second time in my life I lived through a few hours of a Phillips Oppenheim novel. As we anchored a long way out from the quay-side, a large picket-boat with about thirty Egyptian policemen on board and led by Ingram Bey, the British Chief of Police in Alexandria, dashed alongside. I was taken off the ship with all my luggage, including a couple of heavy trunks which were in the hold. There was a fleet of motor-cars awaiting us at the quay and I got into one with Ingram, my luggage was piled into others, and policemen into the rest, and off we went through the town to the station with motor-horns blowing full blast all the time. On reaching the station I was hurried on to the platform, where the express to Cairo had been waiting over an hour for my arrival. Two compartments had been reserved for me and at the door of each stood a British detective in civil clothes, both holding revolvers in their hands. My luggage was piled into one compartment and I hurriedly entered the other, and off we went. I should have added, though it might well have been taken as a matter of course, with the detectives beside the door of my carriage was also standing that most ubiquitous of all Pressmen, Ward Price, of the *Daily Mail*. In Turkey or in Egypt, in Yugoslavia or in Germany, whenever there was a crisis or trouble, there I always found Ward Price, first on the spot and generally in one of the front seats. How he got there I do not know. What salary the *Daily Mail* paid him I do not know either. But he earned every penny of it. His flair was unerring and he just dropped like a vulture out of the sky.

It was getting dark as we left Alexandria, but when I looked out of the window at the various stations at which we stopped I could see in the gloom a detachment of Egyptian troops drawn up exactly opposite my carriage. The detectives remained standing in the corridor outside my door throughout the journey. I had not anticipated anything quite so sensational as this, but I suppose that Keown-Boyd, the Director of Public Security in Egypt, feared lest the murderers of the Sirdar might repeat their coup on me. And of course at that time

it was a distinct possibility, especially in view of the exaggerated importance which had been attached to my nomination, thanks to those loud-sounding but really quite innocuous words Minister Plenipotentiary. Throughout my three years or so in Egypt I always had an R.A.F. gunman attached to my person and living in my house. It certainly was not necessary during the latter part of my stay, but I made only half-hearted protests against it, as the gunman was a very useful addition to my household and looked after and drove my car.

On my arrival in Cairo I was met by one of the Secretaries, Mark Patrick, who afterwards left Diplomacy for Parliament and died a short while ago, and one of the High Commissioner's military A.D.C.s. They accompanied me without a word to the official Rolls-Royce, Mark Patrick sitting beside the driver and the A.D.C. with me in the back of the car. The instant that the car reached the Residency door, Patrick leaped off the front seat and disappeared in the darkness. The A.D.C. took me up a corridor to a small drawing-room, and having opened the door and said "Mr. Henderson, sir," he, too, took to his heels. Lord and Lady Allenby were sitting by the fire, and after I had shaken hands Lady Allenby said, "I hope you had a good voyage, and now I must go to bed." It was just ten o'clock and I was left with the Bull, but by that time I had pretty well realized what I was up against. For two hours we had it out. Possibly it was good training for meeting Hitler later, for the Bull did not mince his words. Some of the things he said were outrageously unfair both about Sir Austen Chamberlain and myself, but I managed to bear in mind Selby's opportune hint about keeping my temper, which was never particularly mild or a respecter of persons. At midnight Lord Allenby suddenly looked at the clock and said, "Good Heavens, it's twelve o'clock. You must be tired after your journey. Come along with me and I will show you your room." I have always remembered that abrupt change from an angry and resentful man to a charming and courteous host.

The next two or three days were very difficult for me. I felt I was wanted by no one in the Residency, and yet I had to play the part which H.M. Government had instructed me to fill. On the third day, however, as we were returning from an audience with King Fuad, Lord Allenby said to me, "Mr. Asquith is coming to stay with me to-morrow: do you see any objection to my putting my case up to

him?" As it happened, before I left London Sir Austen had told me that Mr. Asquith was at Jerusalem, and might be going to Cairo, and he said that I could, if I thought fit, tell him all the facts without reserve. I therefore, of course, replied that I saw no objection whatsoever, provided I also were given an opportunity of explaining to Mr. Asquith the view-point of H.M. Government as held in London. Lord Allenby agreed, and so it was. On the night on which he arrived the Field-Marshal had it out with Mr. Asquith, and I had a long, straightforward talk with him the next morning. He was a wise old man, Mr. Asquith, and a great statesman, and I have always felt grateful to him for the help which he gave me on that occasion. What account he gave to Lord Allenby I do not know, but that afternoon the Bull sent for me. Practically all he said to me was, "Mr. Asquith thinks that I am lucky to have to deal with a gentleman." From that moment our relations became absolutely normal and eventually pleasant, though the Bull continued in my presence to refer to me as the "Minister-Plenipot."

It was a curious chance which, when the High Commission ceased to be in Constantinople and the ships and the Army had departed thence, sent me to the only other diplomatic post where there was still a High Commissioner and still a British Fleet and Army. Consequently for nearly eight years in succession I had the unusual experience of a diplomat working in close co-operation with soldiers and sailors, and a very pleasant and instructive experience it was.

Egypt was in a very unsatisfactory condition when I got there in December 1924. The country had been run practically as a colony during the 1914-18 war; Cairo had been the headquarters of vast numbers of troops, the fellaheen were conscripted for labour battalions, and many of their oxen, donkeys, and camels requisitioned. Most of the Anglo-Egyptian officials had been called up or seconded for special services and their places had perforce had to be taken by Egyptians. These were excellent provided their superiors were English, but on their own they were amenable to every form of graft. Every kind of abuse was introduced into the enlisting and requisitioning schemes, and all classes of the Egyptian population, and particularly the fellaheen, were seething with discontent, and of course the British were blamed for all the injustices. Finally, this discontent ripened in 1919 into a regular revolt which had to be repressed by military force.

Order was restored by General Bulfin, and it was at this moment that Lord Allenby was appointed British High Commissioner. An attempt was made to clarify the abnormality of the situation by means of a regular treaty with Egypt. The negotiations failed to be conclusive, but the upshot was that Great Britain was to recognize Egyptian independence and guarantee it against outside aggression, on condition that Egypt recognized Great Britain's privileged position in the Nile Valley. And whilst Egypt was to control her foreign affairs, it was understood that she would not make treaties which conflicted with British policy. Egypt, in fact, was to be an independent State subject to British oversight of its foreign policy and the safeguarding of British interests, including the garrisoning of the Suez Canal zone by British troops.

This compromise in no way satisfied the Egyptians, and the revolt of 1919, though superficially scotched, continued to simmer underground. It was almost Irish in its methods, but far less justifiable. No Englishman can feel either proud or happy about the way Ireland was treated by England right up to the middle of the nineteenth century. But our connection with Egypt since the 1880's had done nothing but confer untold benefits on that country. For that at least she should have been grateful, in spite of her understandable desire to govern herself. The basic principle of Lord Cromer's twenty-five years' rule at Cairo had been that of fitting the Egyptians to govern themselves. The only real question was when they would be fit to do so. What had happened in the war-years in respect of requisitioning had not been encouraging. Be that as it may, between 1919 and 1924 there had been some thirty murders of, or attempts to murder, British subjects without in a single case any one of the criminals being brought to justice. The murder of Sir Lee Stack in the streets of Cairo was, however, the last straw, particularly as it was immediately followed by a mutiny in Khartoum of the native troops, including some Sudanese battalions who had been propagandized by their Egyptian officers and comrades. That, too, was quickly suppressed, but the ultimatum which Lord Allenby presented to the King of Egypt was the proof that even the slow-moving British lion had lost his patience and temper. One of its clauses was that Anglo-Egyptian condominium in the Sudan was to all intents and purposes ended. Every Egyptian soldier and official was immediately expelled from the

country, and the only symbol of the condominium which was somewhat reluctantly allowed to survive was the Egyptian flag, which continued to fly over the Governor's-General Palace at Khartoum.

The murder of Sir Lee Stack entailed the nomination of a new Governor-General; and the abolition of the Egyptian share in the condominium meant the consideration and settlement of a number of new problems in connection with the organization and administration of the Sudan, especially in military and financial matters. Sir Geoffrey Archer was appointed the new Governor-General, though not Sirdar or C.-in-C. of the Egyptian Army as Stack had been. Partly to get me out of Cairo, and to allow the rumours about my official position there to subside, Lord Allenby asked me to go down to Khartoum to greet the new Governor-General on his arrival, and to represent him at the discussions which would then take place in respect of the new régime in the Sudan. It was a job which I was only too delighted to undertake, especially as, with the Bull's permission, I took with me as guide and instructor Dick More, the Sudan agent in Cairo. I could have had no more agreeable or better-informed companion. He had been a great athlete in his day and played cricket for Middlesex and the Gentlemen of England. He had put on a lot of flesh, but like many fat men was very shrewd and quick in the uptake, and extraordinarily good company.

The whole journey to Khartoum was full of interest. One went from Cairo to Assouan by train, thence to Wadi Halfa by steamer, and on from there to Khartoum by train again. But what made the greatest impression on me was the following incident. Just before one reaches Wadi Halfa the Nile narrows and one passes through a somewhat steep gorge. On the top of the cliffs on the left-hand side there towered up what looked to me like the ruins of an old castle. I asked Dick More, who was standing beside me, what it was. His answer was, "That was the headquarters of the IXth Legion." There could have been no more emphatic reminder of the greatness of the Roman Empire, and it was especially brought home to me because I had been travelling myself in the last few weeks in modern conveyances, trains and steamers, endless distances and days, since I left London. From London to Trieste, Trieste to Alexandria, Alexandria to Cairo, Cairo to Assouan, and Assouan to the heart of Africa at Wadi Halfa. Yet the Romans had done it all mostly on their feet

eighteen hundred years before, and had had a regular garrison there. Never had the greatness of Rome been brought more vividly home to me. All my life I have liked to think that the old Romans, who held Britain for four hundred years, left behind them something more than their roads; that the Christian religion, and London, and some of their great virtues have become part of our heritage.

Geoffrey Archer had reached Khartoum only a few days before Dick More and I got there. The three main problems to be solved concerned the creation of the Sudan Defence Force, the provision of money for the administration of the country, which had hitherto been provided (£700,000, I think) by the Egyptian Government, and the development of the Gezira and Kassala cotton crops, which formed the chief visible wealth of the Sudan. Luckily in General Huddleston, who had joined the Guards as a private in the South African War and had risen from the ranks, the Sudan Government had a very competent and able officer to organize the new force. His cousin, another Huddleston who had been at Eton with me, and was a regular member of the Sudan Service, was an expert in cotton growing; while as its financial adviser the Sudan Government had George Schuster, a brilliant authority on all monetary affairs who was afterwards financial adviser to the Indian Government. What the young Sudan Government owed to Schuster was incalculable, since not only was he an expert in his own subject but a man whose counsel was worth taking on almost any question—and as a matter of fact, money does affect almost every question relating to administration. I should have liked H.M. Government to take over the £700,000 liability, but this the stepmotherly Treasury was unwilling to do. To my mind, it seemed undignified and impolitic to ask or to insist that as part of the ultimatum the Egyptians, once evicted from the Sudan, should go on paying this contribution. But there it is; in peace-time it is the hardest thing in the world to get the Treasury to spend money abroad. Our parsimony in this respect is in glaring contrast to what poorer countries such as the French, Italians, or Germans used to spend on any purpose calculated to increase their prestige or serve as propaganda.

Dick More and I were staying at the Palace, and after our second meeting with Archer and his advisers Dick came into my room that evening and asked me what I thought of the new Governor-General.

I said, "Oh, I think he'll deliver the goods," and Dick agreed with me.

The next day was, I think, January 19th, on which date, since the heat in June was intolerable, the King's Birthday used to be celebrated in the Sudan, and probably still is. A great garden-party is annually held on that date in the Palace grounds, and the native sheiks from the heart of Africa and from every corner of the Sudan come up to Khartoum to pay their respects to the Governor-General as a token of their loyalty to the King. Birthday honours are distributed in the shape of decorations or swords and robes of honour. A new Governor-General was an occasion, and the garden was packed with native chiefs and rulers, and a most interesting spectacle it was. I can still see Sir Geoffrey Archer, 6 feet 6 inches tall, in full uniform with cocked hat, a splendid figure of a man, standing on the Palace steps leading down to the garden with the throng of natives below. I thought to myself, "That is the type of man who should appeal to them."

Now, Dick More had not been in the Sudan for six or eight years. But he had been Governor of Omdurman and was acquainted with nearly everybody present. He spoke Arabic perfectly, and his quick humour and power of repartee were greatly appreciated by the natives. I watched him most of the afternoon being patted on the back and received with obvious pleasure and generally with great shouts of laughter by all. He was certainly the success of the party, and everyone seemed genuinely glad to see him again. That evening he came again to my room and said, "You and I were wrong. All these Sudanese tell me that Archer is not the man for them." And we were wrong, and these untutored natives from the heart of Africa were right. Before the year was out Archer had retired and Sir John Maffey had taken his place.

Dick More and I left Khartoum a few days later and the rest of our trip was informative sight-seeing. El Obeid was our farthest point south, then back through the cotton-fields of Gezira and thence back to Khartoum and by rail to Kassala, on the Eritrean frontier, which I actually crossed in order to be able to say that I had been on Italian territory. Thence we made our way back again and down to Suakin on the Red Sea, where we stayed a couple of days before catching a steamer which would take us through the Suez Canal to Port Said. Thanks to my companion and guide, I knew, superficially, a lot about



the Sudan before we got back to Cairo. I have rarely enjoyed a trip more.

By the time More and I got back to Cairo the unpleasantness of my appearance on the scene there was practically forgotten and everybody and everything were reverting to normal. British subjects were even neglecting to carry revolvers with them wherever they went, which had been the order after the Sirdar's murder. (I had been given a .32 Colt, confiscated from some Egyptian malefactor. I have kept it ever since, but I never went so far as loading it till I joined the Home Guard in 1940, sixteen years later.) But, moreover, Russell Pasha and his Egyptian police, officered largely by Britishers, were on the track of Stack's murderers. The credit for their actual capture belonged almost entirely to Ingram Bey, the Chief of Police in Alexandria, and the story is one which would make a wonderful detective thriller, and if they could get hold of the papers about it, I would warmly recommend it to Agatha Christie or Dorothy Sayers. In the event, all seven of the actual participants in the murder (we always believed there was a hidden hand behind, though we never could prove it) were arrested in the course of an attempt to escape into the western desert. It was a momentous achievement, and Russell and Ingram well merited the C.M.G.s which they received in the next Birthday Honours List. For the capture of these criminals put a complete and absolute stop to the murder campaign which had been going on for five years.

## CHAPTER XVII

THE malefactors were tried and condemned to death in July. By that time I was Acting High Commissioner, and I advised the Foreign Office that, to avoid all appearance of vindictiveness, I would like to recommend to King Fuad that the penalty of one of the seven be reduced to a life sentence instead of death. I was encouraged to do this by Ingram Bey, from whom I learned that according to Moslem law it was forbidden to condemn to death two brothers for the same offence; and as it happened there were among the seven two brothers, of whom the younger was the ring-leader. H.M. Government wished me, in view of a half-promise which had been given by Lord Allenby, to ask King Fuad to remit the sentence of a man who had turned partial King's evidence. But I stuck to my point, and in the event it was the elder of the brothers who got a life sentence, instead of being hanged, as were all the six others.

Thereafter there was peace in Egypt. The capture and extirpation of the murder gang was the chief cause of this, but what contributed in no small measure was the courage and resolution of Ziwar Pasha, who had become Prime Minister after the November ultimatum. He was a huge man, a Turk with no Egyptian blood in him, weighing nearly twenty stone, and lion-hearted. When asked by Lord Allenby to undertake the invidious and dangerous task, which it was at that moment, he tapped himself on his immense chest and said in French, "I'll hold the breach for you"; and right nobly he did so. Half of his Cabinet were what might be called King's men, and the other half Liberals. To appreciate the position in Egypt, at that time—and to-day still probably—a few words of explanation are necessary. There were three parties in the country, the Conservative or King's party, the Liberals, and the Egyptian Nationalists. Up to the last war the Egyptians themselves had played no part in the government of the country, which had always been administered by the ruling class of pure Turks, Circassians, and Albanians, who had been so long the dominant minority in Egypt, as in so many other parts of the world. The old Ottomans were a virile lot. The first true Egyptian to become a Cabinet Minister was Zaghloul Pasha, who had been carefully

selected by that wise statesman Lord Cromer, who foresaw clearly the sure evolution of Egyptian history.

Both the Conservative and the Liberal leaders were all of Turkish origin. The Nationalists, on the other hand, were of almost purely Egyptian blood, but, rather like our own Labour party in its early days, without administrative experience, and less intelligent than their rivals. But they were then and are the coming force in the land, with the fellahen behind them. The Conservatives were strong supporters of the Throne, and though comparatively stupid were also comparatively honest. They had behind them the prestige which a King, who is the dispenser of titles and decorations and other advantages, inevitably gives. The Liberals, headed in 1924 by Sarwat and Sidky Pashas (the latter a financial genius, who would have succeeded in any country), the Copt Tewfik Doss and Hafiz Afifi Bey, comprised the intelligentsia of Egypt. It was this latter virtue which undoubtedly endeared them to their fellow-intelligentsia at the British Embassy, since their backing in the country itself was practically non-existent. To all intents and purposes they represented themselves and nobody but themselves, but they were intelligent enough to have always governed the country well, while looking carefully after their own interests. Not that there were no absolutely honest men among them: Hafiz Afifi was one, and so, in particular, was Adly Pasha, their real leader, who, by the time I got to Egypt, had adopted the rôle of elder statesman and left his mantle to Sarwat Pasha to wear. He was, however, to come back again as Prime Minister later for a while after Ziwar had gone.

Dishonesty was not the prerogative of the Liberals. King Fuad once told me that when any one of his subjects asked for an audience it was always for one of three things, a title, a decoration, or money, and he always knew in advance which in the particular case it would be. Honesty is either a natural virtue or one slowly built up on tradition. In our own case both these factors have been instrumental in creating the high standard of honesty which in general exists in Britain and the British Empire. Fundamentally the Anglo-Saxon race was always honest by nature and inclination, but the tradition was only fixed during the Victorian epoch. When we criticize others, as we are apt so lightly to do, we forget our own past, the age of Walpole, who said, like King Fuad, "Every man has his price," the

days when the great majority of posts and even commissions in the Army were for sale, the age of the rotten boroughs and bribery and corruption at elections, etc., etc. Other nations are more backward and less honest by nature than we, or have not had time yet to create a tradition. This is particularly the case in some of the new countries of Europe, where there are no class distinctions and where official position and money are the sole criteria of social superiority. Yet the wish to be superior to one's neighbour is a natural human instinct. It is not to be wondered at that in such lands corruption is prevalent.

The Egyptian is no exception to this general rule, though I believe that he will acquire the tradition of honesty quicker than most, since he has had before his eyes, ever since the eighties of the last century, the unexceptionable example of the Anglo-Egyptian official—an example which had been set for all time by that great pro-Consul Lord Cromer, who found Egypt bankrupt and left it rich and prosperous, and yet was himself a poorer man when he went away than he had been when he arrived twenty-five years earlier. So poor indeed that when a grateful King and country made him an Earl, it was the Treasury which had to pay the £400 in fees which an earldom entailed. Yet every scheme which was to make Egypt and others so rich had first to receive Lord Cromer's approval. Clive in similar circumstances, but 150 years earlier, had said when he was impeached, "I am astonished at my own moderation." But for Lord Cromer it was a case of utter and complete integrity.

But to return to the political situation in Egypt. The murder of the Sirdar and the British ultimatum had relegated the Nationalists to the background. Ziwar, with the bayonets of the British Army of Occupation behind him in the last resort, was governing the country with a Cabinet composed of Conservatives and Liberals almost equally balanced. He had in addition the King behind him; and with the Nationalists cowed for the time being, had on the face of it a free hand and no opposition to deal with. It was the most peaceful summer that Egypt had enjoyed for many years.

As soon as Lord Allenby had gone I had moved with the whole staff down to the summer residency at Alexandria and spent five quiet months there awaiting the arrival of the new High Commissioner, George Lloyd, who had been created Lord Lloyd to enhance his

prestige. During all those months there were only two incidents, and they were symptomatic, of the intrigues which were going on under the surface but which were not so much directed against the British as indicative of the struggle which was going on between Liberals and Conservatives, or, what it really amounted to, between the enemies and friends of the King. For the Liberals at heart wanted a republic, and their slogan was K.M.G.; or in words, "King must go."

The first incident might have appeared superficially to be anti-British, but in effect it was a card played by the Liberals to secure popular support. Ziwar Pasha suddenly presented me one day with a memorandum claiming the right of the Egyptian Government to apply to the Council for membership of the League of Nations. I must say that the gallant old boy, who had undoubtedly been egged on by his Liberal colleagues, realized quite clearly himself that it was a try-on, and when I flatly declined to accept the memorandum at all, he withdrew it without argument or insistence. There was a second memorandum, although I have forgotten to-day what it was about; but it, too, raised a question which was "taboo" under the four reserved points of our unilateral agreement with Egypt, and I equally refused to accept it. Somewhat foolishly I handed them both back to Ziwar instead of taking them away with me. He promised to send me privately copies of both of them, but he never did. Undoubtedly when he reported back to his Cabinet, the latter advised him not to do so.

The second incident was the abrupt dismissal one Sunday morning of the Minister of Justice, who was a Liberal, and his immediate replacement by a Conservative without consulting me. Ziwar had by then left Egypt to do a cure at Vichy, and Sidky Pasha, too, was travelling about in Europe. I at once sent for the acting Prime Minister, reproached him in vigorous terms for his precipitate action, and demanded that another Liberal be found to replace the one who had been so summarily and probably unjustly dismissed. I got no satisfaction, however, the attitude of the Government being one of passive resistance to changing again an appointment which had already been made. All the acting Prime Minister said was, "I cannot understand why you should support the Liberals. Look at this." And he produced from his pocket a letter from Sidky Pasha, who was then at

Geneva, which he read out to me. The gist of it was, "I enclose the correct form of application for membership of the League of Nations. All you have to do is to send it direct to the Council, but be careful not to say a word about it to Henderson." Those, said the acting Prime Minister, are the sort of people the Liberals are whom you are supporting! And it was indeed rather a bad case about which I personally felt some resentment. For Sidky had begun his tour in Europe by going to Italy and had asked me for recommendations. I had given him various letters, including one to Sir Ronald Graham, H.M. Ambassador at Rome, who had been particularly helpful to him. In return he had tried to play me a dirty trick, and for a long time afterwards I had nothing to do with Sidky. Then he came one day and asked why I was offended with him. I told him the exact truth, adding that while I was always prepared and anxious to trust people till they let me down, once they did so I never trusted them again.

I got no change out of the acting Prime Minister; not that he was stubborn, but there were forces behind him which kept him from yielding. King Fuad, who was exceedingly well informed, was definitely and not without reason determined to put the Liberals in their place. And in the meanwhile a new star had arisen in the Egyptian firmament in the shape of a young man called Nashaat Pasha (now Egyptian Ambassador in London). He was the King's favourite and enjoyed H.M.'s full confidence, and through him it was the King who in effect was directing the Government through its Conservative members. He was very intelligent and a great schemer. But he was a brave man, and personally I liked him and found him very helpful in everything which was not contrary to his own and his master's interests. I saw a great deal of him, and to all intents and purposes he and I ran Egypt that summer until Lloyd arrived. But he had become by that time the most hated man in Egypt, Liberals and Nationalists combining to execrate him, while most of the Conservatives were jealous of his influence with King Fuad. So much so that when Lloyd did arrive I told him jokingly that if he wished to make himself supreme in Egypt, his best course would be impartially to hang the King's favourite Nashaat and the popular idol Zaghloul, one on each of the two magnificent Flame of the Forest trees in the Residency garden. As a matter of fact, one of Lloyd's first acts was to insist

with the King that he should give up Nashaat Pasha and send him on a diplomatic mission abroad. After a hard struggle King Fuad yielded, and Nashaat was sent as Egyptian Minister to Persia and has remained in diplomatic posts abroad ever since. He was Minister in Berlin when I first went there before being transferred to London. He is still a young man and may yet play a big rôle in the political life of his country.

Apart from these ripples on the surface, Egypt when Lord Lloyd arrived there at the beginning of November 1925 was as quiet as any English county. I had known George Lloyd all my life and we were friends, though I had never seen very much of him. He was a man with a great capacity for responsibility; of the noblest ideals as regards service to one's country; of the highest courage and of great personal ambitions. From his earliest youth his sole objective had been to become Viceroy of India: everything was subordinated to that fixed idea. All the time that we were in Egypt together we remained personal friends, but politically we were poles apart, and in the end he short-circuited me and worked entirely through the First Secretary Wiggin. Nor could I, nor did I, take exception, somewhat galling though it might be, for I would have done the same myself. It is highly disagreeable to work with anyone whom you know, however loyal in public, to be privately disapproving. He came out to Cairo with the definite instruction of H.M. Government to endeavour to conclude a bilateral agreement and alliance with Egypt. That entailed appeasement and concession, and both those terms were anathema to George Lloyd. He was a die-hard of the die-hards, and by nature opposed to any form of concession. In fact he was the worst selection possible for the job that was given him. He was the man to hold Egypt down in a difficult situation. None could have done that better than he or upheld the honour of Britain with greater determination and courage. But giving up anything was contrary to his most innate instinct and, as I have said above, no agreement with Egypt was possible without giving up something. He was the man to hold a fort to the last, but not to bargain about surrendering a part of it. So, from the start, his negotiations with the Egyptian Government which were conducted with Sarwat Pasha were foredoomed to failure, a fact of which I was convinced from their very beginning.

My own instincts were just the reverse. I felt that an agreement

had got to come and that, in that case, it was better to make it at once, rather than fail and begin again when the concessions would have to be still greater. I was impressed by the principle of *Bis dat qui cito dat*, and I was terribly anxious not to miss our market once again. Each time we failed meant yielding more the next. It was consequently not extraordinary that Lloyd and I looked at the question from two diametrically opposite points of view, and that he turned to others to help him along the lines which he was bent on pursuing. Nevertheless, I was, I trust, absolutely loyal to him in public and I think that he appreciated that fact, for our personal relations to the last were always intimate and cordial. I had in fact always the highest regard for him personally as well as respect for his abilities, if they had only been used appropriately. But Egypt was not the post for him. It proved in fact his undoing.

When the Labour Government was returned to office once again in 1929 and decided to appoint another High Commissioner to Egypt, Lloyd hurried back to London to argue his case. He passed through Paris on his way there, and I took him to dine with me at the house of the Baroness Kitty Rothschild. There were just the three of us and we had dinner in the very attractive garden of 3 rue Michel Ange on a lovely summer evening. George was full of his own case and very pugnacious. I remember begging him with great earnestness to go slow, and to accept his removal from Cairo on the ground that his own views and those of the Labour Party were too different to make the prospect of any useful co-operation in the least probable.

George professed to be at least half convinced, but when he got to London he did just what I had advised him not to do. The result was disastrous. Winston Churchill made Lloyd's case the subject of an attack on the Labour Government in the House, with the only result that Mr. Arthur Henderson, who was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was able to prove that, if Labour had not come in at that moment, the Conservative Government of Mr. Baldwin were so dissatisfied with Lloyd that they themselves were on the point of recalling him from Cairo. Which was the fact of the case. Mr. Baldwin himself told me a few months later that his Government had no intention of ever employing Lloyd again. It was a very tragic business; and as I was really fond of Lloyd and appreciated his great qualities and



realized his intense love of his country, I was sincerely distressed. For twelve years thereafter he remained out of that public service which meant so much to him. Later, as President of the Navy League, he did render great service to his country, and he made some very able speeches in the House of Lords on the subject of the India Bill, but it was not the same thing. I always felt that he was eating his heart out. When Winston Churchill became Prime Minister in 1940 he gave George the portfolio of Colonial Secretary in his new Cabinet, a task for which he was eminently suited. I was overjoyed, for Lloyd was a fighter and no yes-man. But that also proved a tragedy, since, having at last got back into the saddle, he held the post only for a few months before he died; and a great loss he was to the country at such a time of difficulty and crisis. But there it is. At the time when we were in Egypt in 1925 these things were not to be foreseen, not even through a glass darkly.

For the rest of my time in Egypt, or at any rate from the winter of 1926 onwards, I took a back seat at Cairo, though I had Alexandria to myself each summer when Lord Lloyd always took four to five months' leave. There were many compensations, for Egypt was a particularly agreeable post to be in. There was racing every Sunday all the year round, at Cairo and Helouan in the winter and spring, and Alexandria in the summer and autumn. One played a certain amount of cricket in pleasant and friendly surroundings, and a lot of golf on the somewhat uninteresting courses which had been laid out round the race-courses in both cities. Almost every game one can think of could in fact be played in the famous Gezirah Club grounds, and the large number of soldiers, airmen, and Anglo-Egyptian officials created surroundings which might well have been anywhere in England. Rather too much so, indeed, seeing that after all we were in Egypt.

Above all there was the duck-shooting, which was wonderful. Every duck from Europe seemed to pass through Egypt in the winter on its migration to the centre of Africa. Water was a very limited commodity in Egypt, and they consequently congregated in a few suitable areas. The principal of these were the Residency shoot at Ekiad, the King's water at Sakkaria, George Lotfallah's marsh at Marg, and the largest of all, Tel el Kebir, of which the soldiers and Anglo-Egyptian officials were members. I shot at all of them and

never had such shooting in my life. I used to get between twenty-two and twenty-five days in the season, and for my first three winters my average per day was between fifty and fifty-five duck. It was a terribly bad nesting season for duck in Europe in 1927, and in the winter of 1927-28 my average fell to twenty-seven. But even so what fun it was!

Ekiad and Tel el Kebir were fairly near to each other and were always shot on Fridays, the duck flying from one marsh to the other. The Ekiad shoot was on the property of a friendly Pasha, and the procedure was to go up there on the Thursday evening in the High Commissioner's special train and sleep on board at our destination. In the early morning we walked about a mile across heavy sand to the lake and took our positions in hides, each of us having two or three fellaheen to pick up the ducks for us and a dozen or so decoys scattered round the butt. The water was mostly only about knee high and the fellaheen made excellent retrievers. Other boys rowed in boats over the far end of the lake to put up the duck which tried to settle there. When the gun who was the farthest out (No. 10 Butt) reached his post, he let off his gun and the fun began. It was exciting enough, if one was in one of the nearer butts, to listen to the quackings and splashings before the gun went off. But when it did the whole sky was full of thousands of duck and, if one had not had special grips, one's gun would have been too hot to hold in a very few minutes. The first phase lasted for ten or fifteen minutes, and after that the duck were out of shot or had cleared off altogether. But they were always coming back again, and for a couple of hours one had to be constantly on the *qui vive*. By 10 a.m. it began to get too hot to go on and the duck had mostly taken refuge on the Nile. One collected one's game, counted it, and walked back to the Pasha's house, where we were given a gargantuan lunch and sometimes entertained in other ways. After lunch we went back again to Cairo and most of the duck went to the hospitals there.

One of the charms of the sport was the diversity of duck, chiefly teal and shoveller, but also mallard and pintail, gadwall and widgeon, pochard and garganey teal, tufted duck, marble duck, and other varieties. On one occasion a duck was shot to which even Lord Allenby, who was a great authority on the subject, was unable to give a name. He sent it to the Cairo Zoo, but they too could make nothing

of it, so it was sent to Berlin. The report which came back from there was that it was a cross between a duck which only lived in Europe and a drake of a species confined to Asia. Presumably they met by chance on a pool in the Ural Mountains.

The King's shoot at Sakkaria always took place on a Sunday by invitation, twice or at most thrice a season. As King Fuad did not shoot himself, his Grand Chamberlain, Zuefika Pasha, a keen sportsman, was in charge of the proceedings.

There was some talk in Cairo about the High Commissioner shooting on Sunday. In consequence of it, Lloyd, who was deeply religious, put the case up for a decision to Gwynne, the greatly liked and respected Bishop of Cairo and Khartoum and a brother of the Editor of the *Morning Post*. The Bishop's fiat was that there was no objection to his Sunday shooting provided the High Commissioner attended early service first. The "Bish," as he was familiarly called by all and sundry, civilians and soldiers alike, in Egypt, was that best of all prelates, a broad-minded one. We played a game of golf on one occasion to decide whether I should read the lessons at evening service in the pro-Cathedral once a fortnight. The Bishop won. I always read them at morning service in Alexandria when I was acting High Commissioner. Those were practically the only occasions while I was in charge on which I used the official Rolls-Royce and all the paraphernalia of the High Commissioner, i.e. two motor-cyclists riding ahead and blowing their horns incessantly to clear the way, then the Rolls with airman gunmen on motor-cycles at each side of the car level with the back wheels, and behind that again a car with half a dozen policemen armed with tommy-guns. It was all done at top speed, and the din was terrific. Personally, I hated it, but as the Moslems are so strict about their Fridays, I thought it just as well to remind them that a Christian could feel just the same way about his Sunday. The Bishop once asked me if I would like to preach the sermon in the church at Alexandria. I said I would if I could take as a text, "O God, who alone workest great marvels, send down upon our Bishops and Curates . . ." So I didn't, nor indeed would my conscience have ever allowed me to do so. My private life was never sufficiently above criticism to permit me to talk to my fellow-men from the superior position of a pulpit.

For me one of the nicest shoots of all was Marg, which one could

reach in under an hour by car from Cairo. One day a week George Lotfallah used to pick me up at my house in Gezirah in the pitch dark. It was still dark when we paddled out in small boats to our various butts and we began to shoot when it was light enough to see. As a matter of fact, one or other of the guns would, out of excessive keenness, generally start shooting before the light made it really fit to do so. I can still see in my mind's eye the great red sun rising in the east behind a row of palm trees at the far end of the swamp. On more than one occasion I was at work in my office by eleven, having killed a hundred duck to my own gun in the early hours of the dawn before getting there. Those were unforgettable days. The duck came from every direction, at every angle, and at any height, and shooting them was a thoroughly sporting proposition and a knack, too, at which one constantly improved, though the main secret was to keep absolutely still till the very last moment and never to allow one's gun-barrels to flash in the sun.

But for me Egypt really meant Alexandria for the four or five months that I was yearly in charge there. I was always happier when I was on my own. The whole of the Residency moved down there in a special train at the beginning of June, and there we stopped till Lloyd came back from leave late in October or November. It was a quiet life too, as most Egyptians who could went somewhere else for the summer, and there was never a crisis in the summer months.

One of the pleasures at Alexandria was the bathing at Stanley Bay. I used to go there by car in a bathing-dress at 8 a.m. every morning of every day in the week with my private secretary and two dogs which Dick and Lal More always left in my charge during the summer whilst they were on home leave. One of these was a spaniel who loved the water, but the other, a fascinating little black bitch, "Tuppence" by name, a cross between a West Highland and an Aberdeen terrier, abominated it. I used to carry her out in my arms to give her a wash and make her swim back, but only once of her own volition did she take to the water, and that was the very first time that I took her to Stanley Bay. On that occasion she watched me swimming out to sea and thought, I suppose, that I was leaving her for good. She then ran along the rocks to the farthest point she could reach, and from quite a height plunged into the water and swam after me. I turned round

and we swam back together, but after that first experience she realized that I was always coming back and never again could she be induced, whether by rubber balls, of which she was inordinately fond, or any other device, to enter the water again.

Occasionally, when the sea was rough and the wind was blowing from a certain quarter, Stanley Bay became extremely dangerous for bathers, owing to a strong undercurrent seawards. Every year there were a certain number of fatal accidents, in spite of the black flag which was hoisted on the cliff whenever these conditions prevailed. I disregarded the black flag myself once, but only once. My private secretary that year was a young man called Wallinger, who had been educated at Sherborne. Tall and well set up, he had been prominent as an athlete at his school, which he had represented at boxing as well as at cricket and football. I decided to have my bathe without going out of my depth. But I went just a little bit too far, and suddenly found that I could not get back and was being slowly drawn out to sea. Being a little wiser than I was at Cuckoo Weir, I at once shouted to Wallinger for help. He was at the time standing on the beach and I have never seen anyone get off the mark quicker. He just didn't waste even a split second and was himself a strong swimmer. As it happened, just as he reached me my feet touched the bottom on a spit of sand which chanced to run out from the shore. But that in no way detracted from the merit of Wallinger's rescue performance.

He showed, too, his quickness in action on another occasion. I had been out to dinner somewhere, and had taken him with me in one of the open cars with a military chauffeur. The latter had been too hospitably entertained by the household, and when we started for home was thoroughly pickled. I did not notice it till we had gone quite a distance, when the car suddenly started to make straight for a palm tree by the side of the road. I said to Wallinger, who was sitting beside me at the back of the car, "For God's sake stop that chauffeur." The words were not out of my mouth before Wallinger was over on the front seat in full control, with the driver deposited by the side of the road. It really didn't take more than a few seconds. Wallinger was decidedly a man with whom I would have been glad to go tiger shooting.

One was never dull at Alexandria. Those who were unfortunate

enough to be compelled to spend the summer in Cairo were always glad to come down to the Residency at Alexandria for the week-end. One summer Charlie Grant, who was G.S.O.I. to the G.O.C.-in-C., Sir R. Strickland, came practically every week-end. There were chance visitors, too, like Field-Marshal Lord Plumer, who was then High Commissioner in Palestine. He stayed with me once for a week, and was very cross with me because I said that I did not think Tim Harington would ever be C.I.G.S. because of his inability to be ruthless. Then there was always a possible Fleet visit to Alexandria. Roger Keyes was C.-in-C. the Mediterranean Fleet at that time, with my old friend from Constantinople, John Kelly, as his second in command. The *Iron Duke* was still the flagship, and on one occasion King Fuad came to lunch on board her. After lunch Keyes had the whole of the ship's crew march past the King; I forget what the ceremony is called, but it was the only time that I witnessed it. I happened to have no High Commissioner's or Ambassador's flag down at Alexandria with me, and I have still got among my possessions from Berlin, now reposing for the duration in four lift-vans at Berne, the flag which the *Iron Duke* made and presented to me.

One of the minor amusements at Alexandria was to go in the early morning to one of the King's gardens and shoot doves. It sounds a mouldy sport, but was a considerable test of marksmanship. The doves used to migrate southwards from Europe in the summer. The trees in the garden were tall and it could be said of these birds that they flew as high as a pheasant, as fast as a partridge, and that they jinked like a woodcock. I used to do a lot of business in those early mornings with Nashaat Pasha, who was just learning to be a sportsman. He could hit nothing on the wing at that time, but anything that came and sat within shot was fair game to him. He would kill a golden oreole as gladly as a dove. But he became in due course an excellent sportsman, and had acquired quite a reputation as such in Germany, when I met him again ten years later in Berlin. Altogether I was always sorry when I had to pack up and return to duty in Cairo.

It was while I was down there in 1927 that Zaghloul Pasha died and his funeral in Cairo was made the occasion of a great national demonstration. Personally, I always felt that His Majesty's Government treated Zaghloul with extraordinary stupidity. We were repeatedly

exiling him, say, to the Andaman Islands and then allowing him to return to Egypt and exiling him again shortly afterwards, this time to Gibraltar, and so on. We were completely inconsistent and seemed unable to follow any definite policy in regard to him.

Nothing is more fatal than to keep chopping and changing, a fact which was very vividly brought home to me once by a personal experience. It was during my first period in Russia and I had gone down for the week-end to Tosno—where there was a syndicate shoot of which I was a member—on the chance of finding elk. The shooting-lodge was miles away from anywhere, in the middle of a vast forest which stretched in all directions for hundreds of kilometres. It was midwinter, with deep snow and about twenty-five degrees of frost. There were no elk, and after lunch I decided to take a small rifle and try to shoot a hare. There were many tracks in the snow and I amused myself by following one which zigzagged all over the place. I was so engrossed in this that I thought of nothing else for a couple of hours, until I suddenly realized that it was getting dark and that I had no idea where I was or in which direction to go in order to get back to the house. I began by retracing my own footsteps, but in winter the night falls fast in Russia and I had gone but a short distance before it was too dark to see them any more. So off I went blindly in what I hoped was the right direction, but after walking for about ten minutes I got the impression that the forest was growing more impenetrable and that the trees were closing in on me. So off I went on another line, and once more I gained the same impression as before.

By that time I was thoroughly alarmed at the possible prospect of freezing to death in the night. So I said to myself, "You fool! If you go first in one direction and then in another, you will get nowhere and just die of cold in the end. Make up your silly mind which way you are going to go, and then, whatever happens, go on in that direction. Even if you have to walk all night, you must in this way at least get somewhere in the end." I spent about five minutes thinking it out carefully and trying to remember where the sun had been when I left the lodge and where it had set. Eventually I made up my mind, and off I started. I had a short fur coat on and *varnickis*, or felt boots reaching well up above the knee, and in spite of the cold I sweated like anything ploughing through the snow and wondering how long I

could keep it up. As a matter of fact, the ordeal lasted only about half an hour, when I suddenly, to my immense relief, came on a beaten track leading to the lodge. But it was an adventure which remained an object-lesson to me all my life. Many years later the late King Alexander of Yugoslavia asked me for my opinion on a certain matter in which he had been following a very irresolute line. I answered by telling him the above story.

But to return to Zaghloul. I was always convinced that instead of making a martyr of him we should in spite of everything have endeavoured to work in Egypt with and through him. In the only long talk I ever had with him I was confirmed in this opinion. He had a keen sense of humour and could laugh at his own misfortune as well as profess to understand our difficulties. Anyway, when he died, arch-enemy of Britain though he was supposed to be, I decided as acting High Commissioner to attend his funeral, which took place, as it was midsummer, the very day after his death. I accordingly let those concerned know that I would do so, and at the same time said that I would travel up from Alexandria by the ordinary train instead of by a special train which in those days was always used by the High or Acting High Commissioner. I did this because in any case the railway lines were congested with trains bringing Zaghloul's supporters from every part of the country. Actually the train was nearly two hours late and I did not reach Cairo till at least half an hour after the time fixed for the funeral procession to start. General Strickland was waiting for me on the platform at Cairo station and it was a question whether it was worth while going to the rendezvous at all. However, I decided to 'do so, and when we reached the big marquee in which all the principal mourners were forgathered, we found that the procession had been postponed till the acting British High Commissioner should arrive.

While I had wished to attend the funeral, I had no thought of playing a leading part in it. But I was soon undeceived, and before I knew where I was I found myself as one of Zaghloul's four principal mourners walking immediately behind the coffin, the other three being the King's *Chef-de-Cabinet*, H.M. Prince Toussoun representing the Princes, and Fathallah Barakat, Zaghloul's nephew and nearest male representative. Moreover, the organizers had been very considerate and had arranged that after walking in the procession for about a mile



## W A T E R   U N D E R   T H E   B R I D G E S

I could slip away at a convenient cross-road. Thus in the end, after all the vicissitudes of Zaghloul's career, the British representative in Egypt was one of Zaghloul's principal mourners. I never heard whether H.M. Government approved my action or not, but certainly it did no harm in Egypt.

## CHAPTER XVIII

THREE summers in Egypt in succession are at least one too many, as all who have lived there will agree. Moreover, my own views as to policy in Egypt and those of my Chief differed so widely that I felt I was doing no good there. I consequently asked for a change and pressed for the post of No. 2 in Paris, namely Counsellor, but with rank as Minister, which meant that diplomatists appointed Ministers to independent posts did not go over one's head in the Foreign Office list—a detail of some importance. I had always regarded the Minister's post in Paris as *the* plum of the Diplomatic Service. Paris was so close to London that, although abroad, one was still able to keep in touch with people in England, also a point of importance to me who had spent my whole service out of it and had therefore to a great extent lost contact with my own country. I even hoped that I might somehow manage to remain in Paris till I got an Embassy, thus avoiding altogether the Legations, which I had always very erroneously regarded as of minor importance. Such was my reasoning, but, though it appeared to me attractive and not unsound, it was in fact a grave mistake to go from one post in which I was No. 2 with Minister's rank already to another in which I would be in exactly the same position. From a pension point of view, also, it was an error, as one's salary in both posts was only that of a Counsellor, the Ministerial title being counted as honorary. In fact I was a fool to ask for Paris instead of for an independent Legation, which I could more easily have got and which would have paid me better. However, there it was; I asked for Paris, and when Eric Phipps, who had been there for six years as Counsellor-Minister, was appointed to the Legation at Vienna in 1928, I was selected as his successor.

So I left Cairo in the spring of that year. It was a wrench leaving my charming little house and garden in Gezirah, next door to the Tom Russells and just opposite the Mores, and to leave the many friends I had made in Egypt, but it was high time I went. There was no need to hurry on the return journey, so I decided to travel to England via Palestine and Asia Minor. Lord Plumer was still High Commissioner in Jerusalem, and as he had kindly invited me to stay with him there at any time, I went to Jerusalem first of all. Barely a month before

Lord Lascelles and Princess Mary had been staying with him, and Lady Plumer had conducted them round all those places with which the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments, have made us so familiar. She very indulgently offered to do the same for me, and I shall never forget her kindness, the wealth of detail which she supplied, or the impression made upon me by the realization that these were not mere names but actualities, from the stable at Bethlehem to the Via Dolorosa, and from the well at which Jacob met Rachel to the tombs of Abraham and Sarah in the cave which he bought at Machpelah. It was all a most fascinating and unforgettable experience, and I would recommend every Christian who can do so to visit Jerusalem.

From Jerusalem I went by a hired car driven by a British Arab chauffeur, Lord Plumer having warned me against the French Syrian drivers. My first night I spent at Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee, the second at Damascus, which was thronged with French troops, and the third at an hotel at Baalbec. Every moment of that tour was full of absorbing interest. Fascinating and absorbing are the only possible adjectives. I missed, of course, Lady Plumer's wonderful fund of information and I should have liked to have had a companion with whom to share my emotions. The amazing ruins at Baalbec I saw, as they should be seen, by moonlight. It was necessary to get special permission to do so, and I was alone, or thought I was, as I wandered among those vast stones and columns. I had been advised to take a revolver with me, and did so. After I had been there about a quarter of an hour I heard a step behind me and turned quickly round with one hand on the pistol in my pocket. But it was only a gendarme who had been sent by the police authorities to see that I did not get into trouble. He gave me a very smart salute, and at once addressed me in fluent English, which he had learnt at the American College at Beyrout. He had heard, he said, that I was a British Minister. He was himself a Druse and hated the French. Could not I persuade the British Government to take over Syria, and so on and so forth. It was all rather embarrassing, and I had to explain that I was a very small kind of Minister with no influence over my Government, and that in any case the French were not as bad as he made them out to be, for he was very bitter against them. Once I got him away from his grievance, he made an interesting companion during the rest of my exploration.

I continued my journey the next morning by car to Beyrout across the mountains of Lebanon. As we came down on the far side and had nearly reached the flat country again we suddenly came upon another car swung sideways across the road. The driver was still sitting at his wheel but was stone dead, another dead man was lying in the ditch at the side of the road, while a third, who looked almost as dead, was being attended to by an Arab, who had apparently just arrived on the spot. At first glance I imagined bandits, but I soon learnt that the car, which was badly driven, had in some way turned a complete somersault and righted itself. I had not even any brandy with me and there was nothing I could do. So after talking to the Arab I said we would drive on and send a doctor back from the nearest post, which he told us was some ten miles farther on. This I did, but it had been a disagreeable adventure. I heard later that the car was one of the Beyrout to Bagdad service and that, though the chauffeur was an Arab, the two occupants were Englishmen. It has always weighed on my conscience that I did not accompany the doctor back to the scene of the accident, but my time was limited.

At Beyrout I called on the British Consul-General and the French High Commissioner, and learnt from both some of the difficulties connected with the administration of Syria with its five quite separate component parts differing one from another in almost every essential respect. I also said good-bye to my very excellent Jerusalem Arab chauffeur and, after the incident at the foot of the Lebanon mountains, was grateful to Lord Plumer for his wise advice to me about native drivers.

From Beyrout I went by train for the rest of the journey of several days via Aleppo and across Asia Minor to Haidar Pasha. Kemal's decree abolishing the fez for Moslems had been issued after my time in Constantinople and it seemed very strange at the stations at which we stopped to see nothing but Turks wearing every kind of hideous European hat and cap. The only disappointment of my journey was at Haidar Pasha, where I hoped to find the old *Makook* and to cross the Golden Horn once more on board her. But she was unfortunately out of commission for some reason or other, and I had to take the ordinary ferry boat. However, it was a great pleasure to see Constantinople and many old friends there once again. The Ambassador at that time was Sir George Clerk, a good acquaintance of long stand-

ing, and with him I stayed in the Embassy which I had known so well. He was, in my opinion, one of the sanest and most level-headed of all the British diplomats whom I met in the course of my career. Yet he was not appreciated as he should have been, and though he ended as Ambassador in Paris, he might with advantage have been retained longer in that post. After spending two or three days with him I took the Orient Express, once more and for the last time, back to London.

Perhaps the least said about my second term in Paris the better. I didn't earn my salary, and from a career point of view did myself no good. Quite the contrary! The only two posts which I ever worked to get were Rome and the Minister's job in Paris; and both, though for different reasons, profited me not at all. Still, I would not have missed my Paris experiences for anything in the world. According to La Rochefoucauld, "*qui regrette ses expériences arrête son développement*," and I learnt a good deal of worldly wisdom during that second period in Paris, and who knows how much that helped me during the rest of my service? However, after Paris I took an oath that I would never agitate for any particular post again, but leave it to Fate, which had proved herself so invariably kind to me.

It was not, perhaps, entirely my own fault. My three summers in Egypt had done a lot of harm to my health and I was very near a nervous breakdown when I went to Paris. In fact I would certainly have had one if a kind friend had not packed me off that September to Dr. von Dapper's sanatorium at Kissingen, where I put on over a stone in weight in a month, and which made another man of me by Christmas. Then I had a most brilliant chief, with a brain second to none in Europe and a capacity for logic and debate which even the cleverest Frenchmen envied, which is saying a good deal. Nobody ever wanted to discuss business or politics with Nevile Henderson who could get five minutes with Lord Tyrrell. And not only that. The head of the Chancery, round whom particularly in Paris (as I knew from my own experience in that post) all the work centred, was Ralph Wigram. As the result of an illness he was half a cripple and work was his only interest and pleasure. You could not give him enough of it, and it was always most ably and efficiently done.

With Tyrrell above me and Wigram next below, I was really a fifth wheel in the Paris Embassy coach. It did not take me long to discover the fact, and I took every advantage of it to be completely idle. The

devil soon finds mischief for idle hands and I got into plenty of it, including gambling on margins on the American market, which in 1928 was as fashionable an occupation in Paris as elsewhere. I was caught in the slump in 1929 good and proper, and it took a number of years to straighten out my entangled finances. American Radiators and Simmons' Beds were my two chief speculations, though it would have been the same whatever I had chosen. I bought Simmons' Beds round about 80 dollars and at one time they had risen to 180. I finally sold the lot of them at 3 dollars.

Nevertheless, as I have said earlier, everything both good and bad is experience and therefore instructive, and I personally have no regrets about my second Paris term, except the indubitable fact that I failed to earn my pay.

I did not get much of a holiday at home when I got back to Sedgwick from Cairo. Lord Crewe had made arrangements (he was my thirteenth Chief) to leave early in June, and I had to hurry out to France to take over from him pending Lord Tyrrell's arrival. On the very first night in Paris I was dragged by the Mendls to a fancy-dress ball given by a certain Count Etienne de Beaumont. Charles Mendl even provided a dress for me, that of a penguin, which was worn by all those who did not wish to take the bother of dressing themselves up in any particular costume. French cosmopolitan society had changed greatly since I had last been in Paris in the war and peace-conference time, and I was in reality glad of the opportunity to have a look at all the new stars which had arisen in the Parisian firmament. They were all there in marvellous array, Baroness Eugene de Rothschild, the Comtesse de Ganay, the American wife (Audrey Emery) of the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovitch, Mya Abdy, Sir Robert's Russian first wife, and a whole heap of others. Beaumont was very artistic, and everything, including the tableaux, was exquisitely arranged. I remember Lady Mendl, who was already any age from the sixties to the seventies and never gave her secret away, playing her part in one of them in a perfectly hideous Oliver Messel mask, but her figure might have been that of a girl. Altogether it was a spectacle well worth witnessing.

A few days later the Crewes gave a garden party which constituted their farewell to Paris. The garden party at the Embassy was in fact a recognized annual affair and invitations to it were greatly in demand.

Having no criterion of their own, it was to some extent regarded in Paris as a sort of presentation at Court. I remember that particular occasion because of one incident at it, which some of those who know me least would regard as surprising in the light of subsequent events. I was talking to a lady when Herr von Hoesch, the then German Ambassador in Paris who afterwards died when he was Nazi Ambassador in London, came up to speak to her. She, of course, introduced me to him, but he only stopped a few minutes. When he left she turned on me like a tigress and said, "How dare you, a miserable Counsellor, even though you call yourself a Minister, treat an Ambassador like that?" I knew I had hardly been civil, but I did retort, "I shall be as rude as I like to any German, Ambassador or otherwise." In point of fact he was decidedly one of the better sort of Germans. He had been German representative in Paris ever since the Versailles Treaty and had carried out his difficult task with great tact and discretion. We were afterwards quite good friends.

My chief joy in Paris was my flat at 11 Rue de l'Université, on the left bank of the Seine. For one thing it was always a delight to cross one of those Paris bridges in the early morning on one's way to one's work at the Embassy. The house itself belonged to Leon Bailby, the Editor of the *Intransigeant* and a factor in French politics. It was a seventeenth-century building and he lived in the part of it which overlooked the garden. Then there was the courtyard, and my share of the house was that which one describes in French as between *cour* et *rue*. It consisted of two floors with an interior staircase, the upper floor of which I reserved for guests, keeping the lower for myself. The seventeenth-century staircase, which I had practically entirely to myself, was a joy in itself. The internal decoration of the flat had been arranged by an old friend of mine, Mlle Germaine Leus, who had a genius for such things. She afterwards arranged the Berlin Embassy for me; and the Jewish décorateur, who was Aryanized by the Nazis because of his indispensable skill in such matters, and who was also honorary hereditary décorateur to His Majesty's Embassy, always said that even in Lady D'Abernon's day the Embassy had never looked so well.

On my own initiative I did for the Berlin Embassy two things which it always seemed amazing that none of my predecessors had ever apparently thought of doing. I had a refrigerator put in the

kitchen and a lavatory for guests on the ground floor. All the reception-rooms were on that floor, and until I went to Berlin any guests who wished to go to the lavatory had to go upstairs, where a servant used to remain on duty to show them the way. But my flat in the rue de l'Université was a real gem which it was a sheer undiluted pleasure to live in. I also had a first-class woman-cook, Anna, who afterwards came out to Belgrade every year for six months during the winter season when I used to entertain. It was an expensive proposition, as she insisted on bringing her own French kitchenmaid with her, but it was well worth it.

Even if I did practically no work I got a great deal out of life during the year and a half that I remained in Paris. Nor politically was there anything very exciting going on in the world just at that time. Poincaré was Prime Minister and stabilized the French franc at about 126s. to the £ sterling, the figure at which it remained till 1940. I remember, too, attending the much-advertised signature of the Kellogg Pact outlawing war. What a mockery! I can well recall thinking at the time how utterly dishonest and unfair it was to delude the British public by eyewash of that kind. This is the earth and not Paradise, as Lord Tyrrell once said to me, and though we can avoid wars ourselves—perhaps—by remaining strong, we are never going to prevent other nations from fighting when the mood takes them. Moreover, Stresemann, who signed the Pact for Germany, was just as busy as everyone else in that country at that time, doing all he could in secret to prepare her for the next war.

There was one incident during that year which I recall with much pleasure. American Independence Day is celebrated each fourth of July with much ceremony in Paris at a banquet given by the American Chamber of Commerce to their French Allies. The *Stars and Stripes* and the *Tricolour* are triumphantly toasted in patriotic speeches, whilst, metaphorically speaking, the *Union Jack* droops at half-mast. Lord Derby attended one of these functions at the end of the last war as a tribute to the United States for their share in winning it, but no other British representative had done so. Nor is that surprising, for the position of the British representative at such a feast is of a somewhat invidious nature. A great friend of mine, Norman Armour, now American Ambassador in the Argentine, happened, however, to be in charge of the American Embassy whilst I was in Paris. Americans



have always reminded me of the rhyme about the little girl who had a curl in the middle of her forehead, and who when she was nice was very very nice, but when she was not she was horrid. Armour was one of the very very nice sort, and I must say that during thirty-five years' service in diplomacy I met a great many of the same type. Armour invited me to the dinner to say a few words, and after consulting with Lord Tyrrell I agreed. At the end of the dinner, when the President of the Chamber of Commerce thanked the speakers, the reference to myself was received with by far the greatest enthusiasm by the four or five hundred guests, who were, of course, mainly Americans. I was greatly touched, and the memory of the kindness of those Americans to me on what they realized was a difficult occasion is a very warm one.

## CHAPTER XIX

I HAD barely been a year in Paris when I was suddenly asked to go as His Majesty's Minister to Belgrade. I was shocked and horrified at the suggestion and rushed back to London to protest in person. No one ever worked harder than I did to be allowed to stop in Paris, and to get my proposed appointment to Belgrade cancelled. When I look back I marvel at the consideration the Foreign Office showed me, and I did succeed in arranging for the announcement of my appointment to be postponed for several months. In the end I realized what an idiot I was making of myself, and expressed my readiness after all to go where I had been told to go.

What fools indeed we mortals are! Of all the responsible positions I have held, Constantinople, Belgrade, and, of course, Berlin, were politically the most important and interesting. From the point of view of personal pleasure I most enjoyed the first term I spent at St. Petersburg, then Cairo, and then Belgrade. Belgrade thus came into both categories. But Providence in its great wisdom does not allow us to see into the future, and I shudder now when I think of how I fought against going to the post where I was to spend certainly the five happiest and also, politically, five of the most interesting years of my life. They were also the years where I experienced the greatest sorrows of my life; but those had little to do with the post itself.

So to Belgrade I went in December 1929, but I kept on my flat in Paris, though I let it for nine months a year to cover expenses. I also continued my annual cure at Dr. Dapper's in Kissingen up to 1932. It did me a great deal of good and was indeed indispensable to my health. But—and those who know me least are consequently the readiest to judge me—when the Nazis came into power at the beginning of 1933 I just couldn't stomach the thought of returning to Germany, even to Kissingen.

I had not thought much about Yugoslavia, or, as it was still called in 1928, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. It was not till 1929 that the name was changed to what it should always have been, Yugoslavia, the land of the southern Slavs. I knew something about the country, of course, but not much, and what the ordinary,

even the so-called educated Englishman knew was just abysmally nothing. Even letters to me used to be addressed to Belgrade, Budapest or Bucharest, Yugoslavia. All three began with a "B" and were more or less in that part of the world, and who cared, anyway?

I shall never forget a picture in *Punch* about this time which was astonishingly apposite. It represented John Citizen one Sunday afternoon, after listening to one of the soap-box orators in Hyde Park, coming back to Jane Citizeness, who had been waiting impatiently for him with her baby in a pram. "I always told you," says Jane, "that you never hear anything worth listening to from those blokes." "Just shows how wrong you were," retorts John. "Until this afternoon I always thought Yugoslavia was a flower!" It was absolutely typical. The ordinary Briton knows a little about France, Germany, Russia, and possibly Italy, though even in this respect his knowledge is very superficial; but of the smaller countries of Europe he knows nothing at all, and cares less. I remember once arguing in 1941 with a very well educated man about Munich. His main point was that we had been, from a military point of view (he was a colonel in the Home Guard), deplorably stupid to leave, as he said, thirty million Czechs in the lurch. He was amazed when I told him that the total number of actual Czechs in Czechoslovakia was barely over seven millions.

However, there it is, and I confess that not till I got to Belgrade and studied the whole situation on the spot did I appreciate at its true value the key position which Yugoslavia holds, not only in respect of the Balkans, but as regards Central Europe. Once I did appreciate it, I spent the rest of the next five years trying to convince others of what I so keenly felt myself. I met with little sympathy or understanding in any quarter. Even King George V, who used to show every kindness to King Boris of Bulgaria because he spoke English well, and was civilized and plausible (though he was a snake in the grass if ever there was one and utterly unworthy of confidence), was not in the least interested in King Alexander, against whom he was prejudiced partly because he couldn't speak English, but largely because he connected him very unjustifiably with the barbarous murder of King Alexander Obrenovitch and Queen Draga in 1903. The Karageorgevitchs to him were upstarts, and not in the same royal class as the

Bourbon Braganzas. Yet King Alexander had been our most loyal and helpful ally from 1914 to 1918.

As for the Foreign Office, almost anybody was to be preferred to our late allies the Serbs, whom I was always being asked to induce to make concessions to our late enemies the Bulgars. As for Italy, who, during all the time I was at Belgrade, was Yugoslavia's chief problem, and with whom she was in almost incessant polemics, she was during those years the pet of Downing Street, and when I used to represent Yugoslavia's point of view in the quarrels, I was constantly having Signor Gayda thrown at my head to prove how wrong I was. Gayda, the Goebbels of Italy! It was not till 1935, with the invasion of Abyssinia, when Gayda's anti-British articles appeared, that a glimmer of the truth began to pierce the consciousness of that department of the Foreign Office which dealt with Yugoslavia.

The general public, and especially the Labour Party, were equally inimical to the Serbs because King Alexander was ruling as a dictator, and all dictators are in principle anathema to good democrats, quite oblivious of the special circumstances which may have created a dictator in "less happier lands" than ours. I remember paying a visit to Mr. Hugh Dalton, who was at the time Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Labour Government which was then in power. He greeted me with the words, "Hallo, here's the pro-Yugoslav." I have not forgotten how it irritated me, even though it may not have been maliciously meant. I *was* pro-Yugoslav, but not for the *beaux yeux* of the Yugoslavs, but because I was profoundly convinced that to be on the best possible terms with that country was a highly important British interest. In that sense, quite apart from personal reasons, I always remained and still am pro-Yugoslav.

When I returned home from Berlin in 1939 I offered my services to the Foreign Office in any sort of junior capacity. I suggested among other things that I should be sent back to Belgrade as Minister again. I was only too ready to drop the rank of Ambassador if I could serve my country as I believed I could at Belgrade, and I was already quite certain that at one time or another in the war the rôle Yugoslavia would have to play would be a critical and possibly decisive one. The only objection to it, in my eyes, was that we happened to have there

at the time a very sound and competent British Minister, Ronald Campbell junior. Yet, thanks to my intimate friendship with the murdered King Alexander, my long, close, and mutually trustful relations with the Prince Regent, I had held and would have held again an unique position among all branches of the Yugoslav race, Croats and Slovenes as well as Serbs. Even the Prime Minister at the time, Stoyadinovitch, owed a good deal of the success of his political career to me, and my influence with him might possibly have kept him on the rails instead of going off them as he did. However competent the British Minister, he could never have exercised the same influence as I could have done, and I still regret that the Foreign Office declined to consider my suggestion.

The British Legation at Belgrade was one of the latest Office of Works constructions, designed on the model of the Sofia Legation, and had only been completed shortly before my arrival. It was fully and agreeably furnished, comfortable and practical, but with one serious potential disadvantage, namely, very inadequate reception-rooms. Except in the summer in fine weather when there could have been an overflow into the garden, it would have been impossible to have given any large-size reception or even a dance in them. Yet such things are expected occasionally of H.M.'s representatives abroad. The garden itself had been charmingly arranged by my predecessor's wife, Lady Kennard, and had in one corner of it a tennis court which was a godsend to the staff as well as to the Minister, to whom it afforded an opportunity of easy but much-appreciated entertainment. Hospitality and entertainment have not only a considerable propaganda value but help also in the collection of information, and constitute one of the important duties of a British mission abroad. The Legation tennis court consequently proved extremely useful to me. When I was Secretary to Sir Arthur Nicolson in St. Petersburg he used to tell me that most of his best information was acquired late in the evening, when he used to invite one of his guests into his study after a good dinner at which he had plenty to eat and drink. In a similar way I had many serious talks in that garden at Belgrade whilst the others were playing tennis.

The Legation staff was small but on the whole sufficient for the purpose. It consisted on the diplomatic side of two secretaries, a lady typist, and two archivists. The Commercial Secretary and the Consul

also had their offices in the Chancery. There was a Military Attaché who, though accredited to Roumania as well, had his headquarters at Belgrade; and a Naval Attaché whose headquarters were in Rome, and who consequently rarely put in an appearance at Belgrade. There was no Air Attaché, and I had consequently to fight a lone battle to get British aeroplanes introduced into the Yugoslav Air Force. Reduced aircraft production at home, and the cutting down of the estimates of the service departments, rendered such considerations negligible in the eyes of the successive British Governments which were in power in those days.

Of my staff in Belgrade I have very happy recollections. They were a happy family and very helpful and loyal to me. One incident I particularly remember, though I only heard of it after the event. During the critical fortnight following the murder of King Alexander, Miss Pot and the two archivists took it in turns to sit up every night until 3 a.m. lest they might be required to cipher or decipher telegrams in a hurry.

Social life in Belgrade was limited. People were not rich enough nor lived in sufficiently large houses to entertain except on a very small scale. The one exception to this were Prince Paul and Princess Olga, who lived in apartments placed at their disposal by the King in the Old Palace in Belgrade. They were the head and centre of social life there and very admirably did they fill that rôle. The season covered the winter months, and during one season both of Princess Olga's sisters, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Marina, stayed with her. All three were extraordinarily good-looking, and it is not surprising that the whole of Belgrade vied in its efforts to entertain them. That season there were dinners and dances, parties and expeditions, almost every day. It was great fun, for both the unmarried princesses were quite unspoilt and intensely vital. They were out to enjoy themselves, and even the simplest pleasure amused them; and since that kind of attitude towards life is infectious, everybody else enjoyed themselves too. I personally am acquainted with no more charming family, and I have known four generations of it. The Grand Duke Wladimir and the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna were extraordinarily kind to me when I went to St. Petersburg, and it was there that I first got to know their daughter, the Grand Duchess Ellen, then a very lovely young woman with coal-black hair and just married to Prince Nicholas of

Greece. Their three children were the Princesses Olga, Elizabeth, and Marina.

My greatest friends in the Diplomatic Corps were the American Minister, John Dyneley Prince, and his wife. Prince, who had previously been Minister at Copenhagen, was a Professor of Slavonic languages at Columbia University. His mastery of all tongues and dialects was indeed extraordinary. Being also very musical (he composed one of the tunes for Kipling's "On the Road to Mandalay"), I have heard him sing in over twenty languages, and the only time I saw him completely stumped was at a Rotary lunch where a South African talked to him in the Zulu "click" language. His ancestors were of Yorkshire origin and he was extremely well disposed towards everything British.

There was no English church in Belgrade, but we used every Sunday to hold services conducted by M. Sitters, the head of the Y.M.C.A., in the Anglo-Yugoslav Club premises. Prince and I used to read the lessons, and when Sitters was absent Prince, who was a lay reader himself, used to take the services. His sermons, based less on religion than on encyclopaedic knowledge, were always interesting. I was very fond of Mrs. Prince, who was a charming and good-looking woman and a most efficient "doyenne" of the diplomatic ladies. I spent many happy hours in their house and company, and all Belgrade missed them greatly when they returned to America in 1934. Their hospitality was unbounded, and I recall to-day with interest meeting General MacArthur at one of their parties. Prince was succeeded by a bachelor named Wilson, of the regular American Diplomatic Service, who had been a secretary with me in St. Petersburg. On his staff, as First Secretary, was Wainwright Abbott, with an attractive Swedish wife. I liked them both very much, and I was to meet them again in 1937 in Germany, where he had become American Consul at Hamburg.

Outside the American Legation, my chief friends were the Italian and Turkish Ministers, Signor Galli and Haidar Bey. The Italian Legation was newly built and by far the largest in Belgrade. I fear it must be admitted that dictators seem to appreciate far better than democratic Governments the importance and ultimate profit of outward display, and its face value abroad. The equally new British Legation was of a suburban-villa type, and though I would infinitely

have preferred to live in it rather than in the more pretentious Italian one, it gave one the impression of having had as little spent on it as possible. Only just enough space was provided to meet immediate requirements without any regard to the future and the larger rôle which Belgrade is certainly destined to play in Central European and Balkan affairs. Galli's wife was French, and though he was Italian to the core, I never felt that Fascism in its extreme form appealed greatly to him; and, despite the fact that he was afterwards appointed Ambassador in Angora, I was not surprised when he retired before the war to go and live in his beloved Venice. But he was a very good colleague to me and, since Yugoslav politics were largely concerned with Italy, I was fortunate in this respect.

The French Minister when I first went to Belgrade was M. Dard, who was transferred a year or so later to the unimportant sinecure of Monaco. He was succeeded by a minute little creature called Naggjar. His father was a Syrian who had become naturalized and been made a French official. In appearance he resembled a small bird, and was not unlike a miniature of King Alexander, but he was extremely able and intelligent. My relations with him were very friendly, and I was also on good but guarded terms with the German Minister, von Hassell, whose wife was a daughter of Admiral Tirpitz. He was afterwards German Ambassador in Rome till 1938, when he fell from Nazi grace at the same time as Blomberg, Neurath, and Fritzsche. Though not an extreme Nazi, Hassell undoubtedly shared his father-in-law's views as to the desirability of including the Flemish coast and Trieste in Greater Germany.

General Jiklovitch was Prime Minister of Yugoslavia during my first years in Belgrade. He was scarcely the man to inspire confidence in a mixed Cabinet of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, etc., but as Commander of the Guards division his position was a strong one. He was not at home in any language except his own, and I had little to do with him.

The two members of the Cabinet I saw most in those early days were Marinkovitch, a Serb who was Foreign Minister, and Sverluga, a Croat who was Minister of Finance. I had known Marinkovitch and his wife, one of the nicest of all the Yugoslav ladies, in Nish during the last war, when he was Minister of Agriculture. Together with Beneš of Czechoslovakia and Titulesco of Roumania, he was one of three



foreign Ministers of the so-called "Little Entente" Powers which met annually and co-ordinated their policy. Of the three, I used to think that Marinkovitch, though less vocal than the two others, had more foresight and judgment than any of them. He suffered from ill-health, and indeed died during my residence in Belgrade, but I always regarded it as a great misfortune for Yugoslavia when he was quite unnecessarily retired in 1933 and replaced by M. Jevtitch, who till then had been Minister of the Court.

The Little Entente, though a separate alliance, formed part of the French system for containing Germany; but its main preoccupation was lest there should be any resurgence of the old Austrian Empire. Thus a serious attempt to reinstate a Hapsburg Emperor would have constituted a *casus belli* for the Little Entente as against Austria. On the other hand, as Marinkovitch used often to emphasize to me, the Little Entente did not regard the *Anschluss* (however unwelcome) as a matter with which it was particularly concerned, but rather a question with which the Great Powers must deal. Marinkovitch's second in command at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was M. Fotitch, the present Yugoslav representative in Washington, of whose capacity and intelligence I had a very high opinion.

In the New Year's Honours List of 1932 my name appeared as a recipient of a Knight Commandership of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (K.C.M.G.). Had I earned it only one year earlier it would have made a great difference to me, as my mother would then have been still alive. But she had died in 1931 in her eightieth year, and within six months my sister-in-law had obtained authority from the Court in Chancery to sell Sedgwick, which belonged to my nephew, who was then only twelve years old. I thus had lost, at one fell blow, not only my mother but my home. Both were irreplaceable for me, and it was the first really great tragedy in my life, as when my father died I had been too young to appreciate what it was going to mean. When I first learnt from the Secretary of State that the King had been graciously pleased to confer this honour upon me, my immediate thought was, "If only my mother had been alive!"

Partly through my own fault, but largely as the result of circumstances, I had never been a very orthodox diplomat. I had never attended a levée in my life, despite the fact that when I entered the

Service it was the rule that no attaché or secretary should go abroad without having done so. I had been given the C.M.G. when I was in charge of the High Commission in Constantinople, but was thus unable to receive it from the hands of the King himself. When I was first given the rank of Minister I had left for Cairo at twenty-four hours' notice, and had not been granted the opportunity to kiss hands before my departure. I had been appointed H.M. Minister at Belgrade in the winter of 1929 when the King was too ill to receive me, and the Prince of Wales was acting for His Majesty in respect of such formalities. I had consequently never had the honour of being presented to the King, and I had found this fact a great disadvantage in Belgrade, where both King Alexander and Prince Paul were constantly mentioning King George V and I had shamefacedly to admit that, though I was His Majesty's Minister, I had never met him. The dignity of a K.C.M.G. gave me an opportunity of remedying this defect which I was determined to seize. I accordingly went to London and, since Lord Cromer, my former colleague in St. Petersburg was then Lord Chamberlain, I wrote to him as my only friend at Court, asking whether he could arrange for me to have a special audience in order to receive the honour of Knighthood, and I explained to him why I was asking for this favour. He apparently sent my letter on to the King's Private Secretary, Sir Clive Wigram, as he was then, and a few days later I received a Royal Command to come to Sandringham for the following week-end.

I shall never forget that experience and never enjoyed one more. Before starting I had called on Cromer, and asked him to give me some tips as to how to behave in royal circles. He gave me some useful ones, but not enough. I took it for granted that on arrival I should be met by an equerry who would show me my room and allow me to brush and tidy up before being received by their Majesties. I consequently travelled down, as I always did travel, in a pair of grey flannel trousers, a soft shirt and an old coat. As it happened, I arrived about 6 p.m. The front door at Sandringham opens direct into the hall, where it was the custom for tea to be served. Thus, to my utter consternation, when the doors were flung open I, in my exceedingly unsuitable costume, saw immediately before me Princess Elizabeth, who made it a habit to be the first to receive all guests on arrival, with Queen Mary standing a few yards behind her. I was covered with

confusion and, though nothing could have been more gracious than the Queen's welcome, I was greatly relieved when she said that tea had been specially prepared for me in the library next door and that the Duke of York would keep me company. But I was still more confused when, just as I had finished tea, an equerry entered and said that the King wished to receive me. I begged to be allowed time to go and change, but was told that his Majesty was awaiting me. I consequently received the Order of Knighthood in those ragged old clothes.

The Duke and Duchess of York were staying at Sandringham that week-end, but otherwise the only outside guest besides myself was the Dean of Norwich (Cranage). It was my good fortune, therefore, at all meals to sit next to the Queen, and, if I may say so without presumption, I have never found anyone more easy to get on with or better informed. I greatly enjoyed every minute of those two days, and was much flattered when the Queen took me on Sunday afternoon to see her furniture shop and presented me with a reading-table on condition that I took it back with me to Belgrade.

Princess Elizabeth, who was then about six years old, was utterly unselfconscious. She used to come down to tea in the hall, and from the moment that she appeared she ran the entire proceedings. One evening, with only a lady-in-waiting to help her, she performed a charade on her own, and the next she organized a march all round the hall to a tune on the gramophone. Princess Elizabeth led it with the Queen following after, and everyone had to take part. The princess was not in the least spoilt and had charming manners. I can still recollect how, on the Sunday evening before going to bed, she came round to all those who were leaving the next morning and said good-bye to each of us in a few simple but very nice words.

It was my good fortune in the course of the next few years to see and talk with the King on a number of occasions, and what impressed me about him most was his humanity and the simplicity of his way of thinking. The arguments of his Ministers or of clever politicians did not affect him. He thought like one of his people and was at one with them. The immense popularity which he enjoyed, and which was so much in evidence that last year of his life during his Silver Jubilee, was no surprise to me. The so-called common man, the man of the streets and factories, of the ships and the fields, with that unerring instinct

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which is happily his heritage, felt that the King was one with himself, subject to the same joys and sorrows, with the same innate sense of decency and duty, whatever the sphere in which he had been called upon to live. And the so-called common man was right.

## CHAPTER XX

WITH five of her seven neighbours definitely hostile, Yugoslavia's foreign relations were arduous and intricate enough, yet the problem of the internal situation was scarcely less formidable and intractable. Those who criticized and blamed King Alexander most for the dictatorial powers which he had been forced to assume were generally those who understood least the difficulties with which he had to contend. It is true that Yugoslavia was homogeneous in the sense that all its component parts were members of the southern Slav race, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Montenegrins, Bosniaks and Dalmatians, Slavonians and Macedonians, speaking the same language, though in some cases, as in Slovenia for instance, with considerable variety of dialect. But for over five hundred years they had grown apart owing to their having been subject to completely different traditions, religions, and historical circumstances. The Slovenes, Croats, and Dalmatians were part of Western Europe and of the Western Church. Their religion was Roman Catholic and they used the Latin script. A large proportion of the Bosniaks and Herzegovinians were Moslemized Yugoslavs who had accepted Islam in order to mitigate the hardships of Turkish rule.

On the other hand, the Serbs and Montenegrins, the hard core of the southern Slavs, were part of Eastern Europe and of the Eastern Church. Their script was Cyrillic and their religion Orthodox, their civilization and traditions not Roman, but Byzantine. But it was they who had always been the protagonists of the freedom and unity of the Yugoslavs, and who had fought and died to win that freedom and unity. When it was achieved it was consequently not unnaturally the Serbs at Belgrade who played the predominant part in the new union. All the chief posts in the Civil Service as well as the Army were held by Serbs, who undoubtedly took full or rather excessive advantage of the ascendancy and authority which they thus enjoyed. This state of affairs was naturally profoundly resented by the Croats, who regarded Zagreb as a more suitable capital than Belgrade, and themselves as more cultured and more civilized than the rougher Serbs, whom they affected to treat as Byzantine, uncouth, and corrupt. It was these basic differences of civilization and religion, these fraternal jealousies

and hatreds, which made a speedy consummation of Yugoslav unity so difficult to realize. It was a problem which time alone could satisfactorily solve, and which time and the growing up of new generations will alone solve. But it *will* be solved, just as the union of Scotland and England was achieved, though Providence alone knows how long it will take. For Yugoslavia itself is a reality. Personally I go even further. Bulgaria too will eventually join the Yugoslav federation, and Macedonia, now the bone of contention, will be the link which will one day unite Serbs and Bulgars.

Such was the situation, foreign and internal, of Yugoslavia when I reached Belgrade at the end of 1929. As the result of a shooting affray in the Skupshтина, or Yugoslav Parliament, that body had been dissolved, and King Alexander had assumed the dictatorial powers which he retained until his death. Very unwillingly (for at heart he was just as democratically minded as his father King Peter, who had translated John Stuart Mill into Serbian), but solely because he regarded a dictatorship as temporarily in the best interests of Yugoslavia. He had himself no petty racial axe to grind. Of all the Yugoslavs he was alone in being completely disinterested. His one concern was the unity, future welfare, and happiness of Yugoslavia as a whole, and no greater and truer patriot ever existed. His murder in 1934 was a tragedy, not only for his own country but for us. If he had been alive, Yugoslavia would never have allowed Italy to enter Albania unopposed on Good Friday 1939, or have left Greece to defend herself alone against Italian aggression in 1940; nor would the Yugoslav Army in 1941 have been in the state of chaos and disorganization in which it found itself when Yugoslavia in her turn was the victim of German aggression. It is nearly eight years now since he was murdered, and still I cannot think about King Alexander without grief and emotion. I have had few men friends in my life to whom I have been deeply and sincerely devoted, and King Alexander was one of them. I had every cause to be so, for he was a true friend to me, and I believe, and had good reason to believe, that he was as attached to me as I was to him.

My first duty on arrival in Belgrade was to present my letters of credence to the King. Court ceremony there was as simple as possible. Accompanied by a member of the Protocol, I drove to the Palace at Dediné and had my audience alone with his Majesty. According to

normal procedure, these audiences lasted a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes. King Alexander kept me with him for over an hour and a half, and I still have my letters of credence, which I forgot to hand to him. That was the beginning of our friendship. He spoke to me at length of the difficulties and problems of the new State. "What I require," he said, "is forty years of peace in which to build up a tradition of honest administration. That is the only true foundation for Yugoslav unity." It was in those words that he summed up the situation that he had been at pains to explain to me in that first long conversation.

A glance at the map of the Continent as rearranged after the first World War—a study so strangely uncongenial to the great majority of Englishmen—will suffice to indicate the key position, both as regards Central Europe as well as the Balkan peninsula, of Yugoslavia, by far the most interesting of the 1919 creations. Poland had existed up to the end of the eighteenth century and Bohemia had not been merged into Austria until 1620. There had, it is true, been at one time both Serbian and Bulgarian Empires prior to the Ottoman conquests of the fourteenth century, but the conception of a united Southern Slav Federation was practically a new one, though that great protagonist of nationalism, Napoleon, had awakened the subconscious spirit of Yugoslavism when he formed his new provinces of Illyria and Dalmatia. But if the potential importance and ultimate future of Yugoslavia were great and full of promise, the immediate difficulties with which she was faced were no less immense, both externally and internally.

Except for Germany, no country in Europe had so many frontiers as Yugoslavia, though her area was only 100,000 square miles and her population in 1930 under 15,000,000. And of those seven frontiers but two could be regarded as comparatively friendly, namely Roumania and Greece. Italy, Hungary, Albania, and Bulgaria were all definitely hostile; while Austria, though weak and therefore temporarily harmless, always represented the German menace from the north. There was little doubt in the minds of most Yugoslavs in the early 1930s that one day, sooner rather than later, Austria would join the German Reich. They were not blinded by wishful thinking in her respect as were our British politicians. More than once the late King Alexander said to me, "Yugoslavia's immediate danger is Italy; after

her will come Germany; but the last and greatest menace of all will be Russia."

Throughout my five years in Belgrade, Italy continued to be Yugoslavia's main foreign preoccupation, though King Alexander always believed that ultimately in her own interest, and in defence of Trieste against the German menace from the north, Italy would seek to become Yugoslavia's ally. He was far wiser than Mussolini in this respect. No alliance is more unnatural than an Italo-German one. A dominant Germany will assuredly seek an outlet on to the Mediterranean, which must obviously be Trieste, so long held by Austria. It seems to me inconceivable that Mussolini should fail to realize that in helping to establish Germany's overpowering position in Europe he was ruining Italy's chance of keeping the Adriatic as *mare nostrum*. Savoy and Tunis would be poor compensations for having to share the Adriatic and Mediterranean with an aggressive Germany. I used to argue this point with my friend Attolico, the Italian Ambassador in Berlin. I believe that in his heart of hearts he agreed with me and was no great lover of the Axis, but his answer used to be that it was better for Italy to be a good second to Germany than the bad third that she was in the Anglo-French-Italian Entente, which had been built up at Stresa only to collapse like a pricked bubble as the result of the Abyssinian adventure.

In any case, King Alexander tried his utmost to improve relations with Italy and at one time it looked as if he might succeed. He conducted his negotiations with Mussolini with the utmost secrecy through an Italian intermediary who was a personal friend of his. Except for the Minister of the Court, none of his own Cabinet Ministers was aware that negotiations were proceeding. The Italian Minister in Belgrade was a link in the chain, but apart from him I was probably the only outsider whom the King took into his confidence. At the very moment at which the negotiations appeared to be on the point of reaching a successful conclusion, a small incident occurred in a Bosnian village which necessitated the despatch of a few gendarmes to restore order. This was magnified into a large-scale revolt against Serbian rule by the foreign press, which talked of artillery and troops having to be sent from Belgrade to crush the disturbance. There was always talk of internal dissatisfaction leading to open rebellion in Yugoslavia, and Mussolini preferred wishful thinking and press reports



to facts. He broke off the negotiations, then in their final stage, by sending a message to the King through the intermediary that "he preferred to sit at his window and see what happened in Yugoslavia." The King was mortally offended, and from that moment relations with Italy became worse than ever.

What harm the sensational and irresponsible press can do, and did do at that time, chiefly through a number of journalists sitting at what they called the round table in Vienna! Anti-dictator King Alexander and anti-Serb to a man, they were always twisting facts to suit their own theories. They were always representing Yugoslavia as being on the verge of rebellion, and their readers were only too ready to give credence to their stories. Yet so long as King Alexander was alive there was never the least possible chance of real internal trouble. His Majesty was a soldier and the whole of his Army was utterly devoted to him. Revolutions can only succeed where the Army joins the revolutionaries or, as in the case of Mussolini's march on Rome in 1922, where the Army stands aside and remains strictly neutral. On the other hand, history does not show a single case of a successful revolution against the will of the Army. At the first indication of definitely serious trouble, King Alexander would not have hesitated for a moment, but would have crushed it by force of arms at its very inception. This was just as obvious to the malcontents in Croatia and elsewhere—and there were plenty of them—as it was to me, and the realization of the fact was quite sufficient in itself to keep them quiet. But the international press only thought of headlines, and to the last went on prophesying the imminence of revolution in Yugoslavia. And even the most reasonable were inclined to give credence to these stories.

Nobody wishes more than I do that the British press (or rather Press with a big P, considering its power in the world) should be anything but completely independent. On the other hand, we go too far in the opposite direction in studiously refraining from giving even a hint to the Press as to the general line to be followed in matters of policy which may be of the highest importance to British national interests. H.M. Government often loses a great deal by not taking the Press a little more into its confidence in this respect. This is due only partly to a traditional dislike of attempting to influence the Press. It is just as much due to an equally traditional aversion to looking too far ahead,

## W A T E R   U N D E R   T H E   B R I D G E S

or what is known in Foreign Office parlance as discussing "hypothetical questions." I can only quote a ridiculous example of exaggeration in this respect which took place in 1936. His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris reported by telegraph one day that he had been to see the French Minister for Foreign Affairs in order to learn the views of the French Government in the event of a German attempt to occupy the Rhineland. The reply which he received was briefly to the effect that it would be preferable in future for His Majesty's Ambassador not to discuss hypothetical questions with the French Government. Three weeks later the Germans reoccupied the Rhineland.

## CHAPTER XXI

EVEN now, after so many years, I am still infuriated when I think how unfairly, with what lack of understanding, and how unwisely, not only from a political but also from an economic and every other point of view, Yugoslavia was treated by the British Press in those days. Nor was the official attitude much more satisfactory. The competent department of the Foreign Office always seemed to me far more friendly toward our late enemies, either Bulgars or Hungarians, than to our gallant and loyal allies the Serbs. The same phenomenon, *mutatis mutandis*, was equally apparent in post-war years in many circles so far as the Germans and the French were concerned. During my first year at Belgrade I was being constantly instructed by the Foreign Office to press the Yugoslav Government to make concessions in Macedonia to the Bulgars. Equally constantly I used to raise objections to doing so on grounds which I stressed at length, but which in part, at any rate, were motivated by the principle that before the greater Powers started asking the lesser ones to make concessions to their ex-enemies, they had better set the example themselves.

To all intents and purposes I played a lone hand in Belgrade during the five years or so of my mission there. Nor was it only British popular indifference and newspaper criticism or actual dislike with which I had to contend, but also a very determined French opposition. Yugoslavia was one of the three Little Entente countries, Czechoslovakia and Roumania being the other two, which formed part of France's defensive cordon round Germany and with whom she had formal alliances. She wanted a monopoly in Yugoslavia and was very averse to the development of any rival British interests. One of my first setbacks was an example of the methods which she employed to retain this monopoly. Yugoslavia wanted money, and negotiations were begun on the lines of an international loan in which British, French, Swiss, Belgian, Dutch, and other banks would participate. In view of Yugoslavia's strained relations with Italy, it appeared to me desirable to secure Italian participation. I saw the Governor of the Bank of England, Mr. Montagu Norman, several times in this connection, and thanks to his good offices and keen support, after prolonged

negotiations the co-operation of the Italian Banca Commerciale was assured. Then, just as everything seemed on the point of being settled, an independent French bank, that of Paris et des Pays Bas, suddenly offered on its own and maybe on even better terms, to the Yugoslav Government, a loan equivalent to that which the international consortium was arranging (between £7,000,000 and £8,000,000). Its offer was immediately accepted while the representative of the Bank of England was still sitting in Belgrade. It was a thoroughly shady piece of work, and no doubt the palms of the Yugoslav Ministers concerned were well oiled, but I felt particularly resentful at the double-dealing of the French Government, which must have known in advance of the spanner which the Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas was going to throw into the works of the international consortium.

French money and French decorations, both lavishly distributed, were a heavy handicap when fighting for competing British interests, which dealt in neither of those commodities. King Alexander himself professed at times to be unable to overcome French opposition, even where he himself was convinced that British goods were best. A case in point was that of Rolls-Royce Hawker engines for Yugoslav aeroplanes. In aviation the French monopoly in Yugoslavia was supreme with its Potez and Breguets, though both were greatly inferior to engines which the Rolls-Royce Company was prepared to supply. King Alexander himself recognized this fact, yet it took over three years to get the Yugoslav Government at long last to sign a contract with Rolls-Royce for a first consignment of seventy of their engines. The development of the Yugoslav Air Force was held up for all those years, while the struggle went on. I was never able to understand the King's attitude in the matter. After he had been to Paris to see his doctor on one occasion, he told me upon his return that he had been violently reproached by the French Minister for Air for even thinking of introducing British machines into the hitherto purely French-run Yugoslavia aviation. I suppose that the French hold on Yugoslavia was very strong, yet it always struck me as an astonishing case of weakness on the part of the King that he hesitated so long to ride roughshod over French opposition, when he realized so clearly himself that it was in the interests of his country to do so.

In other matters, however, the goodwill and support of the King were invaluable to me when I was working for British concerns. Messrs.

Jarrow with their shipyards on the coast and Mr. Chester Beattie with his rich lead and zinc mines at Trepca and elsewhere in South Serbia, as well as others, would, I feel sure, readily confirm this statement. There were many absolutely honest Yugoslav officials, but there were a terrible lot who lived on graft. Salaries were ridiculously small, and the urge to acquire wealth by other means was therefore very great. The idea of graft is repugnant to the British character, and enterprises such as those I have just mentioned set their faces resolutely against the bribery of the local or central officials. It was inevitable that they should meet with serious opposition constituting in effect a form of blackmail. Whenever I learnt of such cases I used invariably to solicit the good offices of the King, who would always be helpful. To create the tradition of an honest administration was one of his Majesty's dearest ambitions. It was uphill work, but in time, and if he had been able to concentrate on it, I believe that he would have gone far towards laying the foundations.

Unfortunately, in the infancy of the new Yugoslavia, there were so many other preoccupations of greater and more immediate gravity than graft. Never for a moment, except during the brief spell of the King's personal negotiations with Mussolini, did Italy cease to menace Yugoslavia from without or the Croats to give expression to their discontent from within. That the Croats had well-founded cause for complaint was obvious, but that the blame was to be laid entirely on the shoulders of the Serbs, as the British Press always made out, was not the case. There were faults on both sides, for both Serbs and Croats are a pig-headed and obstinate people and it will be a long time before either tribe settles down to regard itself as Yugoslav and not as Serb and Croat. Many a Scot feels the same to-day as regards the English.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the grumbling and dissatisfaction, the constantly recurring rumours at that time of the imminence of an internal uprising in Yugoslavia were a myth which existed only in the sensation-mongering imagination of the newspaper correspondents who made their headquarters in Vienna. Nor is this wisdom after the event. I happened to be spending a few days with Sir Eric Phipps in Vienna when the international Press magnified a trivial affair of bandits in Bosnia into a serious revolt. (It was this incident which led to the breakdown of the private negotiations between King Alexander and

Mussolini, to which I have referred earlier.) According to the Viennese Press, the Government at Belgrade had been compelled to send troops and artillery to suppress it, there had been heavy casualties, and the rebellion was spreading, etc., etc. I was still in bed when Eric sent me up the morning papers with a little note saying how sorry he was, since I would presumably have to return at once to my post at Belgrade. I replied that I had no intention of cutting short my visit, as I was quite sure that the whole story was a malevolent invention. Nor was I mistaken. When I did return to Belgrade I went very carefully into the whole incident and took occasion to motor through the area where it was supposed to have occurred. There had been some trouble at a certain village over taxes and a small number of the villagers (less than twenty) had taken to the hills in protest. They had at once been rounded up by gendarmes, and if there was any loss of life I failed to discover it. Yet that was sufficient for the sensation-mongers in Vienna to make copy for their newspapers. And it was typical of much of their news.

Some years later in Berlin I asked the President of the British Press Association there whether the various correspondents would care to hold a weekly meeting at the Embassy to discuss the situation with me. For this, that, or the other reason the offer was not accepted, but the President did express astonishment at my making it, as he understood, as he said, that I was so anti-Press. I certainly was anti-Press in Yugoslavia, since it did infinite harm; but I am certainly not and never have been anti-Press in principle. Whenever a correspondent of it did not matter what newspaper came to see me, I always gave him all the information that I possibly could. Often I was indiscreet, but never, except on one solitary occasion, was I ever let down. I was always only too anxious to co-operate with the Press, since I have always realized its immense potentiality in a modern democracy for good or evil. In a sense Parliament and the Press, the twin rulers of democracy, suffer from the same defect, in that they confuse foreign politics, a general national British interest, with internal politics, which are a purely social and party affair. Admittedly it is difficult to divorce them completely in these days of ideologies, but the obstacles should not be insuperable, particularly since the war has brought ourselves and the U.S.S.R. so closely together. An all-party committee for Foreign Affairs in the House of Commons, as I once suggested to

Sir Walter Citrine, might constitute the beginning of divorce proceedings so far as Parliament is concerned, just as weekly Press conferences at the Foreign Office might serve the same purpose in respect of the Press.

But one must return to Yugoslavia and her growing-pains. In the opinion of the King, the question of a federation of Yugoslav States or of a centralized Government at Belgrade was one which time alone could solve, and rightly or wrongly he believed that until the Yugoslav principle was more firmly established and generally understood, the course most likely to promote union rather than tend to disunion was centralization. He had no liking for the dictatorial powers which he felt that he had been forced to assume, but he regarded them as temporarily in the interests of his country. The regularization of the internal situation could consequently wait for the moment while he concentrated all his energies on the improvement of foreign relations.

The King's attempt to arrive at a *modus vivendi* with Italy has been described earlier. But he was never afraid of Italy. I used to beg him sometimes not to underestimate his mechanically and technically superior opponents, but his invariable reply was that the post-Mussolini Italians were under their skin exactly the same as the pre-Mussolini Italians. If they attempted to invade his country, all his plans, he said, were ready for dealing with them and getting under that skin. He offered once to tell me what they were, but I begged him not to do so, lest, if any indiscretion subsequently occurred, he might imagine that I had been responsible for it. As for an Italian occupation of Albania, the King always said that if there ever was a landing of Italian troops there, the Yugoslav rifles would go off of themselves. And if he had lived, I feel sure that this would have been the case, or rather, just because it would have been the case, the Italian invasion of Albania on Good Friday 1939 would never have taken place.

When the negotiations with Italy finally fell through, the King set himself with redoubled energy to the task of endeavouring to promote collective security in the Balkan Peninsula. Collective security is an ideal like the League of Nations, and civilization should constantly be seeking to achieve it. But on an earth which is not Paradise achievement of the ideal will be, even after the present war, just as difficult to realize in practice as it has been and is easy to talk about in theory.

There should be no more favourable ground for promoting collective security than the Balkans, constituting, as they do, a solid block of small countries facing any potential aggressor, be it Italy, Germany, or ultimately Russia, as King Alexander used to fear. The common interests of the Balkan States in respect of aggression from without against any one of them are far more obvious and definite than, for instance, would be the case as regards Holland and Belgium if Germany were to attack Poland again at some future date. Yet even in the Balkans it is hard to imagine that anything like genuine collective security will be attainable for a very long time to come. It predisposes not only that each State is contented with what it possesses, but also that it is prepared to make sacrifices for each of its neighbours. King Alexander's efforts were consequently, as subsequent events proved, doomed to utter failure, though I feel constrained to assert once more that that failure would assuredly have been far less complete had the King lived. As it was, he had hardly begun his task when he was murdered. After first proceeding to Roumania and Greece and Constantinople, his first official visit to Sofia was made but a few days before he started on his final journey to Marseilles.

The events of that fortnight before the King's departure for France remain indelibly imprinted on my memory. It began with a sudden and an intensely violent campaign against Italy in the Yugoslav Press. What provoked it is immaterial, though it was probably some abusive article by Gayda, the vitriol in whose inkpot was in those days almost exclusively used at the expense of Yugoslavia. Curiously enough, Gayda at that time enjoyed a certain popularity in England, where his exaggerated accusations against Belgrade found ready credence. It was not till a year or so later, when economic sanctions were introduced as the result of Italy's campaign against Abyssinia, that even the Foreign Office learnt to appreciate the fact that Gayda and Goebbels were birds of a feather. Nevertheless on this occasion the Yugoslav Press campaign seemed to me so unnecessarily virulent with its pungent references to Adowa, Caporetto, and so forth, that I decided to seek the King's intervention with a view to stopping it. His Majesty was still at Bled that September, whereas I happened to be in Belgrade awaiting the arrival of a Parliamentary commercial commission. I consequently telephoned to the Palace and asked one of his Majesty's household to be good enough to enquire whether the



King would give me an audience if I left for Bled that night. I was not popular with some of those who surrounded the King, who thought that I sometimes told his Majesty more than they esteemed to be good for a dictator's ears. Though very restricted in King Alexander's case, I believe that is one of the disadvantages from which all dictators suffer. Forced by circumstances to be very strictly guarded, they are at the mercy of their entourage and particularly of their secret police, who are very favourably placed either to keep the real truth from their master or to invent untruths for his consumption, as suits them best.

A few years later I discovered that this was particularly the case so far as Hitler was concerned, not only in respect of internal but also of foreign affairs, since he knew no language but his own, and could consequently read no newspapers except the strictly censored German ones. He read, it is true, vast quantities of German-translated extracts from the foreign Press, but they were of course only those which his immediate entourage selected for him. In internal matters he was equally dependent for information either on the caprice of Himmler's Gestapo, whose agents surrounded him in flocks whenever he emerged from his mountain fastness at Berchtesgaden, or on that of Goebbels' censorship, which decided what home news should be published in the German Press. Long before I left Germany I used to think that there was probably no one in Europe less well informed than Hitler of the true state of affairs both inside and outside Germany. By that I mean that he heard or learnt only one side of every question, which in the event was that side which the Nazi War Party in Germany wanted him to know.

As it happens, when I telephoned that September morning of 1934 to the Palace I spoke to one of the household who, as I was aware, particularly disliked my intimacy with King Alexander. He could not refuse to submit my request to his Majesty, but when I received his answer a few hours later it was a curt message in French, "*Vous pouvez aller à Bled*" (you can go to Bled)—that and nothing more.

That was, however, all that I required, and I merely replied that I would be leaving by the night train. I telegraphed to the hotel at Bled to reserve accommodation there for me for one night, but when I reached that station the next morning I found a royal car awaiting me and an equerry who told me that arrangements had been made for

me to stay at the Palace. Moreover, after having agreed to see that the anti-Italian Press campaign should fade quietly out, the King insisted on my staying a further two days for some chamois shooting. This, of course, I was delighted to do, quite apart from the fact that since it was the eve of his Majesty's official visit to Sofia, it was extremely interesting from my work point of view to be with him. My failure, on the other hand, to be in Belgrade to welcome and entertain the Parliamentary Commission caused considerable umbrage to one or two of its members, who, quite apart from violently criticizing me on their return to England, as they were fully entitled to do, were, very improperly, equally outspoken about me to my First Secretary, Cowan. Yet there are occasions when one's respect for a British Parliamentary Commission must yield place to what a British representative abroad conceives to be an even greater duty than entertaining its members.

As it happened, the chamois shooting proved to be a failure. When we had ridden half the way up the mountain-side the next morning, the King was suffering so acutely from the return of a painful malady which he had acquired during the war that he found it impossible to go any farther. He insisted on my continuing alone, but half the pleasure was lost for me, and in addition I missed both the chances which I did get. The next day he was still too unwell to go shooting, so I again very unwillingly went by myself, but failed to get a shot at all. I had to get back rather early, as we were leaving for Belgrade that evening.

On my return I met King Alexander in the hall, and he took me into my sitting-room, which looked across the lake of Bled with the hills in the distance. It was a gorgeous autumn afternoon and the view was a magnificent one. I had shortly before been selected for the post of Ambassador in Lisbon (subsequently changed to Buenos Aires) and had been authorized to inform the King of my approaching departure. In the course of our conversation I mentioned that I felt very sad to think that I was probably looking for the last time at those lovely Slovenian mountains. The King said, "Don't say such things. I would like you always to remember that wherever you are and whatever you are doing you have only to let me know and you can come back here as my guest whenever you wish." I like to remember the sincerity with which he spoke and I was deeply touched at the time.

Alas! it was he who was never to see those mountains again. We returned to Belgrade the next morning, the King to make his final preparations for his official visit to King Boris, and myself to make my peace with the Parliamentary Commission.

The visit to Sofia, which lasted for several days, passed off very satisfactorily, and my impression was that King Alexander succeeded in achieving better relations than ever before with King Boris, whom he had hitherto always cordially distrusted. There was to be only two days' interlude between the return from Bulgaria and the departure for Marseilles, and I felt that, much as I wished to hear about the Sofia visit, it would be indiscreet on my part to ask to see the King again during that brief period. On the second day, however, I received word from the Palace to the effect that my audience had been fixed for 6 o'clock that evening. When I arrived at Dedigné the King asked me if I had been surprised to get his message. I replied, "Yes, both surprised and delighted," and I wondered whether his Majesty meant to give me a hint that he felt that I should have asked for an audience for myself. The King then said that he had sent for me to tell me all that had happened in Sofia. For the next hour and a half his Majesty described in detail the events and conversations which had taken place during his visit. I then stayed to dinner with him and the Queen, and did not leave the Palace until nearly midnight.

Of one remark of the King's during that long talk I was to be tragically reminded a few days later. Speaking of the Sofia visit, I told him that I had been immensely relieved at his safe return. "Oh," replied the King, "I was never in the least nervous on that subject in Bulgaria. That sort of thing is much more likely to happen to me in France than there." Whether it was premonition, or whether he had actually received warnings about the likelihood of some attempt to be made on his life in France, I do not know. It may have been one or the other. If there is pleasure in remembering sad things, I feel it deeply in the recollection of that last evening of his life in Belgrade which I spent with him. He left the next morning at 8 o'clock by car for the coast with Prince Paul and Princess Olga, and bade them and his country farewell when he embarked that afternoon on the Yugoslav light cruiser *Dubrovnik* for Marseilles.

I had myself no premonition of evil and departed the next night for

Austria on a visit to the Rothschilds at Enzesfeld. On my arrival at Vienna I spent the day with a very old friend of mine, Walford Selby, who was then H.M. Minister there. He very kindly motored me out to Enzesfeld, which we reached about 5 p.m. Selby stayed there for tea and left about a quarter to six. He was hardly out of the house and we had just sat down for a game of bridge when I was rung up by Hadow, the First Secretary of the Legation, who informed me that he had just learnt from Reuter's agent that an attempt had been made on King Alexander's life at Marseilles, and that the King had been very severely wounded. A quarter of an hour later he rang up again, this time to tell me that the King was dead. In the early hours of the next morning I took the train back to Belgrade.

For about a week Yugoslavia seethed with grief, consternation, and fury, and it was quite uncertain what she would do. Had it been possible to pin the blame on any one country, it is conceivable that she would have declared war on it. But, as it happened, this was just what could not be done. The assassin was a Bulgarian who had been trained in bomb-throwing and shooting at the notorious Janko Pushta, a farm in Hungary. The plot had been hatched by the Pavelic (the present Quisling of Croatia) group in Italy, which was paying expenses; while the French Government was responsible for the (in appearance) almost intentional inadequacy of the arrangements made for ensuring King Alexander's safety, the sparseness of the troops lining the streets, the single horseman riding *in front of* the car, where he could be of least use, the absence of any protection either in the form of a police car or motor-cyclists at the rear and on each side of the automobile provided for the King, the antiquity of even that automobile with its running-board on which the murderer could and did stand and empty his parabellum into the King's body. Indeed, if it had not been for the fact that M. Barthou, the French Foreign Minister, was killed at the same time, and General Georges very severely wounded, popular indignation in Yugoslavia against the French would have been even greater than against Italians, Hungarians, and Bulgarians. As it was, the enraged Serbs felt themselves alone in a hostile world, and did not know on whom to wreak their wrath.

In these circumstances, I felt that it was in the general as well as in Yugoslav interests that Britain should display striking and unequivocal evidence of her sympathy and support. I accordingly telegraphed to

London suggesting that his Majesty the King be represented at the funeral by Prince George, who had just become engaged to Princess Marina, then staying with her sister Princess Olga in Belgrade, and by Field-Marshal Sir George Milne, who as G.O.C.-in-C. at Salonika in 1918 was so well known to all Serbians. In view of the disturbed state of Yugoslavia it was not so easy to obtain the King's consent to this, but thanks to the good offices of Sir John Simon, then Foreign Secretary, who gave me his full support, as well as to the eager readiness of Prince George to see his fiancée again, it was arranged; and although Sir George Milne himself could not come, the British Army was adequately represented by General Braithwaite, then Governor of Chelsea Hospital, and the Air Force by Vice-Marshal Philip Joubert. As for the Navy, thanks to the fact that the C.-in-C. in the Mediterranean, Sir William Fisher (whom I had known in Constantinople days as Chief of Staff to Admiral de Robeck), happened by good fortune to be with a large part of his fleet in Yugoslavian waters at the time, I was able to arrange this direct. I had always had the utmost admiration for Admiral Fisher, both as a sailor and a man, and no one could have been more readily helpful than he was to me at that juncture. I managed to get on to him at Dubrovnic by telephone, and he at once promised to send 120 sailors to march in the funeral procession and to come to Belgrade himself. Whether he got Admiralty permission before or after or at all I do not know. From beginning to end of those harrowing days he always said and did without any hesitation the right thing, and I remember his loyal support with much gratitude.

The respect shown to the memory of their murdered and adored King contributed in no small degree to the mitigation of the outraged feelings of his people and to the tranquillization of the country. Apart from the very distinguished character of the British Delegation headed by Prince George, the French President, M. Lebrun, attended the funeral in person, and indeed it was only right that he should have done, seeing that King Alexander had been murdered on French territory. It was on this (as already related) occasion that I saw Goering for the first time, though I did not speak to him. My principal recollection of him is that he was slimmer in 1934 than when I met him again in 1937. He represented the German Government and flew to Belgrade from Berlin on the largest of the German aeroplanes. King Carol of Roumania, King Alexander's brother-in-law, was of course there; but

King Boris of Bulgaria, the King's nearest neighbour, was conspicuous by his absence.

So far as I was concerned, I remember that I felt more emotion at King Alexander's funeral than I had felt at any other except my mother's. Moreover, behind my personal grief was the conviction, which I felt strongly at the time, and which has been confirmed by everything that has happened since, that the death of the King was a tragedy not only for Yugoslavia but for the Balkans and for Europe. He and Mustapha Kemal were the two strong men of South-eastern Europe, and indeed in many respects they had much in common and were kindred spirits. The Yugoslavs, of whatever branch of their race, need a strong hand to govern them, and never more so than in the early days of their union. The King's eldest son, the present King Peter, was only a boy, and indeed was in England at the time of his father's assassination, having just arrived to spend a year or so at an English preparatory school.

Under the King's will a regency was to be set up in the event of his death, with Prince Paul as Chief Regent assisted by two other members, a Croat and a Slovene. Until that moment Prince Paul, whose tastes were chiefly artistic (according to Lord Duveen he was the best judge of a picture in Europe), had taken no part whatsoever in the government or administration of the country. Moreover, he was no soldier, having been a student at Oxford during the war of 1914-1918. His position as virtual successor to King Alexander till the heir should come of age at eighteen was one of the utmost difficulty. He grappled, however, with the situation with amazing courage and determination. Fortunately, too, though no soldier—a severe handicap in handling such a military-minded race—Prince Paul possessed other valuable qualifications, such as high intelligence and great tact and skill in dealing with awkward situations. In the face of constant intrigues he needed them all to establish his position, to inspire confidence in his government, and to induce his country to settle down after the shock which it had sustained. In spite of the difficulties of his task, he achieved a very considerable measure of success. The situation in Yugoslavia soon became normal again, and for six eventful years Prince Paul directed its destinies with marked ability. But he was a man of peace and not of war, and in the end it was his lack of military qualifications which led him to fail to gauge the real temper of his

people, and hence to his own undoing as well as that of his country.

I had suggested to the Foreign Office that so long as the situation remained unsettled in Yugoslavia, I should remain at Belgrade instead of proceeding to my new post at Lisbon. Some six months after King Alexander's assassination that Department changed its mind and offered me the Embassy at Buenos Aires in place of that at Lisbon. I was exceedingly loath to leave Europe. In March of that year (1935) Hitler had deliberately torn up the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty and had announced to the world that Germany intended to rearm to the utmost. Britain and France had sat back and done nothing in the face of this open threat to world peace, and it appeared to me then that a great opportunity had been lost, and that matters were bound to come to a head before long. The Argentine was very far away from the centre of the coming storm, and I begged hard that the previous arrangements as regards Lisbon should not be cancelled. But my petition was in vain. Though the Foreign Office professed "to leave it to my unfettered choice," it asserted that it was in the public interest that I should go to Buenos Aires. If the latter were true, I could no longer refuse, and very unwillingly agreed. In August 1935 I accordingly left Yugoslavia, after spending the best part of six years there. In the course of them I had lost my mother and the home where I had been born and bred, as well as a friend to whom I was utterly devoted. But my life in Belgrade had been very happy, and I cherish an abiding affection for the country and its people.

## CHAPTER XXII

**B**EFORE leaving for Buenos Aires I had about two months' leave, which I spent almost entirely in Scotland, first at an inn at Kinloch Rannoch fishing, and then with my cousins the St. Justs, who had taken a moor for the season. Though I had already kissed hands in London before leaving for the North, thanks to the kindness of Queen Mary I was honoured by being invited to Balmoral for a couple of days, a Royal Command which I look back on with mixed pleasure and sadness. Very little of the internal decoration at Balmoral had been altered since Queen Victoria's time, and that in itself was an interesting study. It was late September and one day was given up to grouse driving. The weather was perfect and we lunched out on the moor. The King seemed extremely well, and was shooting, just as brilliantly as ever, with the hammer guns which he used all his life, at any rate at anything in front of him. I can see him now, sitting on one of the panniers at lunch inveighing in his usual emphatic manner against the huge annual casualty lists as the result of motor accidents. No cars, he asserted, should ever be allowed to be driven at a speed of over thirty miles an hour. It was the last time I was to see King George V, and I shall always look back with pleasure to that happy day on the hill.

I left for the Argentine some time in the middle of October on board the Blue Star liner *Arandora Star*, accompanied by my sister, Lady Leitrim, and a cousin, Mrs. Irving. The latter was returning to her home in New Zealand, and the former came to act as hostess for me during my first six months. For the first time in my life I crossed the Equator, but otherwise the journey for me was uneventful. Most of our fellow-travellers were Anglo-Argentines returning to their homes, and the one I best remember was Mr. Fraser, the head of an extremely well-managed alpagata factory in Buenos Aires: He was one of the principal organizers of a campaign which was to be opened within a few weeks of our arrival in the Argentine for the sorely needed reconstruction and re-equipment of the British Hospital in Buenos Aires. I promised to give him my whole-hearted support, and to do what I could to assist in launching that campaign was my principal concern when I first reached my new post. The Prince of Wales, who had



received me before I left London, was particularly interested in the Argentine, so I at once wrote to his Royal Highness describing the scheme and suggesting that he might send us a telegraphic message of encouragement. I received his message and a donation of £25 just one hour before addressing the three hundred or so volunteers who were starting out the next morning to collect subscriptions from all over the country. Both had a very inspiring effect and gave us a wonderful send-off.

The campaign itself was an amazing success, and within a month over £80,000 had been collected from a colony that was suffering greatly from the economic blizzard which swept the world after 1929. There is no more patriotic and generous community to be found anywhere than the British in Argentina. They proved it on that occasion; they proved it in the last war; and they have proved it again in the present one. English and Scotch, Irish and Welsh, they constitute a not inconsiderable section of the cosmopolitan population of the country, and they have played a part in its history and development out of all proportion to their numbers, from the time of Canning and the struggle for independence from Spain to the years of railway construction, wheat, and chilled beef.

No country in South America has a greater future before it than Argentina with its area of more than a million square miles and its practically pure white population of over twelve millions. It has, like Chile and Uruguay, no native or coloured problem to contend with. Its basic element is, of course, Spanish, largely Basque, though the vast stream of pre-war emigrants from Italy, till Mussolini dammed it, has resulted in an Italian infusion which must by now form at least a quarter of the population. Into this melting-pot has been poured during the last hundred years a generous alloy of Anglo-Saxon, Irish, German, Scandinavian, and other blood, and the ultimate mixture which will result will be an Argentine people as distinct from any of its component parts as will be the North Americans of the U.S.A.

The British Embassy itself was quite unworthy of its name. As it happened, I gave only one large party there during the year and a half that I was in Argentina—that was almost immediately after my arrival, when I tried to entertain the British colony at Buenos Aires; and even so, the reception-rooms were so inadequate (nor was there any garden)

that I could only invite some four hundred people, which entailed a selection which was invidious and undesirable. By the time everybody had arrived, the rooms were so packed that I was nearly standing in the street myself.

I remember one incident at that party which amused me. Sir George Grahame, who had been so long in Paris and was afterwards Ambassador in Belgium and Spain and who happened to be in Buenos Aires at the time of the party, came up to me at the end of it and said, "You are very foolish to provide such good champagne at a rout of this kind; it is good enough to give your guests at any dinner-party." It was actually a Veuve Clicquot, but of no specified year, which I used to get direct from Rheims and, since Ambassadors pay no duties, cost me just under three shillings a bottle! Admittedly it was very good and lavishly supplied, but unless I had professed to be a teetotalter, I could not well have given my guests anything cheaper to drink.

I had hardly given that party when the King's sister, Princess Victoria, died, and we went into mourning for some weeks. That period was barely over when King George himself died, which meant Court mourning for six months, and by the time that was over there was the royal crisis of 1936 and the abdication of King Edward VIII. I had consequently no inclination or opportunity for official or large parties so long as I was in Buenos Aires, and one result of this was that Argentina was the only post I had at which I was able to save a little money on my entertainment allowance.

I had gone to Patagonia with Lord Allenby to fish in the Traful River when the tragic news of the death of the King reached us. Thanks to the civility of the Argentina authorities and the courtesy of the British Railways, I was able to lose no time in getting back to the capital (a two-days' journey) and making all arrangements for the memorial service. The Anglican pro-Cathedral would have been far too small for this purpose, so we held it at the St. George's Hall, in which we managed to find places for nearly three thousand people. The President of the Republic, General Justo, and all his Cabinet attended the service, as well as the Diplomatic Corps, and of course the British colony in a body. There was only one untoward incident and, as it had been foreseen, it was literally a mere flash in the pan. One of the national industries of the Argentine is photography, which can be and was out there pushed to unseemly extremes. I had

authorized the Press photographers to attend on condition that they ceased their flashlights as soon as the actual religious service began. They did not keep their word, but I had arranged for the members of the British Legion to stand on each side of the platform from which the service was conducted, and at a given signal they very soon had all the photographers out of the hall. Otherwise they would have gone on with their magnesium flares throughout the entire proceedings, as they did in the great Catholic cathedral of Buenos Aires on the Argentine National Day.

There was one event that November 1st which filled me with very justifiable Anglo-Saxon pride, and that was the arrival of Miss Jean Batten, the New Zealander, who flew solo in a Moth plane across the South Atlantic from Dakar. She was the first to accomplish this magnificent feat; and when one saw her one marvelled the more, for she was a mere slip of a girl, good-looking, dainty, and feminine, and by the same token conveying no impression of the strength and will power which were essential to survive such a test of courage and endurance. She must have been steel within, particularly as the whole adventure was planned and executed by herself alone without any financial or material backing and assistance from others. Her femininity was well illustrated by the fact that when she left Africa, in order to lighten her plane, she jettisoned all her spare parts and tools, which in truth would not have helped her had she come down in the middle of the ocean, but brought with her an evening dress, in which she appeared at the banquet of the St. Andrew's Society of the River Plate on November 30th.

The Scots in Argentina played a leading part in the life of the British community there. They had a church of their own, presided over by the energetic and justly popular Dr. Douglas Bruce, while the St. Andrew's Society of the River Plate was the seventh largest in the world. The society's banquet followed by a ball on St. Andrew's Day was always one of the events of the Buenos Aires year. A large number of those present wore their kilts, and there were pipers and haggis, white heather and reels. In view of my connection with Alexander Henderson of Leuchars, who drew up the Covenant in the early part of the seventeenth century, I had the honour to be President of the Society in 1936. In that capacity I had, luckily for the only time in my life, to make two speeches at the St. Andrew's Day Dinner,

one as Ambassador in honour of our Argentine guests (there were always present several members of the Government) and the other as President of the society. Not being a fluent speaker, I decided to confine the latter largely to Scotch stories, and the difficulty was to think of any which were not already well known to everybody. I was helped out of my difficulty by my American colleague Mr. Weddell, now U.S. Ambassador at Madrid, who was a great friend of mine and who told me one which was certainly quite new to everybody. Two Scots met in a pub and each waited for the other to stand the first round of drinks. Tired of waiting, one said, "An extraordinary thing happened to me the other day. I was out stalking and got within eighty yards of my stag. It had been an easy stalk, I was in a very comfortable position, the stag was broadside on, and I took a steady aim at its heart. You know, Donald, what a good shot I am. Well, would you believe it, I missed his heart completely and shot him in the ures." Donald, all unsuspecting, said, "What's ures, Jock?" "A large whisky and soda," was the immediate answer. Altogether I have a very happy recollection of my brief connection with the St. Andrew's Society of the River Plate, and of the good work which it performed among the Scots in the Argentine, chiefly in charitable and educational matters; and I wish it all the success and prosperity which it merits in the future.

Curiously enough, both the French and Italian Ambassadors had been colleagues of mine in Constantinople as Counsellors of their respective Embassies there. I liked them both very much, and my previous acquaintance with them was of considerable assistance to me at my beginnings. There were a number of Italian newspapers in Buenos Aires, and when I arrived in Argentina they were indulging in a violent campaign against everything British on account of the economic blockade of Italy which had been imposed in consequence of her Abyssinian adventure. Though our relations with Italy were strained, Guariglia was actually the first diplomat on whom I called after my arrival. I think he appreciated the fact that I had not allowed a previous personal friendship to be boycotted as the result of bad official relations. Anyway, he was exceedingly helpful. He had been a naval officer in the last war, and I doubt if at heart he was very Fascist inclined. Nor in the end had he any cause to be, as he was summarily retired about a year later. Signora Guariglia was a very

intelligent and charming woman, and I missed them both very much.

By far the most interesting visitor to the Argentine while I was there was Mr. Franklin Roosevelt, and I shall always be glad to have met him. It was the winter of 1936, just after he had been elected for his second term as President. He came to attend in person the Pan-American Congress of twenty-one nations which was held that year at Buenos Aires, and he brought with him a strong delegation containing both Mr. Cordell Hull and Mr. Sumner Welles. His first public act was to speak at the opening session of the Congress, which met in the Argentine Chamber of Deputies. I was most anxious to hear him speak, but it was only with great difficulty and the free exercise of my elbows that I succeeded in doing so. There was a box reserved for the Diplomatic Corps, but the Argentines were no respecters of such details, and the box was chiefly filled by those of them who, in spite of early arrival, had not contrived to find places elsewhere. Neither my French nor my German colleagues ever got in sight of the box, and retired highly offended. Luckily my elbows were fairly pointed, but even so I managed to secure only a very back seat, on which I had to stand to see and hear properly. The box was, however, exactly opposite the speakers, who were, first, Dr. Lamas, the Argentine Foreign Minister and a subsequent winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, who welcomed the guests to the Argentine capital, and secondly, the President of the U.S.A.

I was fascinated by Mr. Roosevelt, by his voice, the resonance and simplicity of his language, his obvious sincerity, and the elevation of his thoughts, and decided there and then that if I had been an American I would certainly have voted for him at the last election. He spoke of the ideals of democracy and in scathing terms of dictators and aggression. But what impressed me far more than anything else were his closing sentences. The only Protestant in a congress of Catholics, "Democracy, however," he said, "is of no worth without religion and faith in God," and so on in a few deeply felt words to the end. Nothing could have been more inspiring. I met him the next day at a banquet given in his honour by President Justo, and had a very brief talk with him after the dinner when the diplomats were presented to him, but from that time I have always felt the utmost admiration and respect for him, feelings which have only been strengthened ever since. He is the one really great democratic leader in this hateful war against

tyranny, and I have no fear for the future of democracy so long as he remains its leader.

Buenos Aires, so far as the British Ambassador is concerned, is practically a purely economic post. Foreign politics, as such, hardly entered into it at all. There is, it is true, one political question at issue between us, namely, the Falkland Islands, which, though they have been British for over a hundred years, the Argentines consider should rightly belong to them as part of their old Spanish heritage. It was, however, never officially mentioned to me during the whole time that I was there. Our good or bad relations seemed to depend entirely on the import duty which was levied on chilled beef entering Britain from Argentina—a penny less or a penny more made all the difference to the prosperity or the reverse of the great Argentine industry and its cattle breeders. Most of the year 1936 was spent in negotiations for the revision of our trade agreement about this. The negotiations were carried on in London, but they nevertheless entailed a vast amount of work in Buenos Aires for the Commercial Secretariat of the Embassy, which was luckily extremely ably and competently staffed with Irving as Commercial Counsellor and Lingeman as his assistant. But it was entirely expert work and I had personally little to do with it, unless there was a deadlock over some major point in London. It then became my job to see the Foreign Minister Lamas and Carcano the Minister of Agriculture (now Argentine Ambassador in London), or possibly even the President, with a view to endeavouring to straighten things out again. Though there were not more than two or three of these crises, the possibility of their occurring kept me in Buenos Aires and prevented me from ever going to Paraguay, to which I was also accredited as H.M. Minister, and presenting my letters of credence at Asuncion. I have always regretted my inability to do this.

Señor Carcano was one of the best types of Argentine landowners and politicians. He was a great gentleman, and public service to him meant duty to his country and not personal profit. He had, too, a very lovely and charming wife. He sent me once a quarter of a baby beef which had been presented to him, as Minister of Agriculture, at some meat show. It was terribly good, and I asked my French chef why he never gave me anything like it. His answer was that such beef never appeared in the market, as it was all exported to Britain. Captain Videla, the Minister of Marine, was another great and very

useful friend of mine, especially when it was a question of contracts for warships for the Argentine Navy. I remember a very pleasant lunch with him on board the cruiser *Almirante Brown*. If it were ever involved in war, the Argentine Navy would give a very good account of itself.

Though I did not know a word of the language before I went to Buenos Aires, I managed to speak it quite passably before I left. Teachers I found quite impossible after several trials, so I acquired it entirely by reading books of Argentine history with a dictionary, and putting down in a note-book useful words and phrases. The best of the books I read was one about the dictator Rosas, who, after governing his country efficiently but with much tyranny and bloodshed for many years, fled to England, became a friend of Palmerston, and is buried somewhere in Hampshire. It was a method which served a double purpose, since at the same time I acquired a considerable knowledge of Argentine history and geography. I have always wished that I had learnt Spanish instead of Italian for my diplomatic exam. It is a lovely language, and as it is that of the whole of South America, except Brazil, where Portuguese is spoken, should be studied far more than it is.

My happiest days in Argentina were spent with my two dogs at the Villa Primavera in January and February of 1936, and 1937 fishing for salmon in the Trafal River. It is true that in 1936 my stay there was interrupted and saddened by the death of the King and that in 1937 I went there with a troubled mind just after I had learnt that I was to be transferred to Berlin. The post of Ambassador in Germany was thoroughly uncongenial to me, and one for which I felt myself very unworthy and unsuited. As I mentioned in *Failure of a Mission*, one of my first reactions on receiving the telegram offering me the post was the old Latin tag about the Tarpeian rock being next to the Capitoll for, even at that early stage, I was fey enough to foresee something of the disastrous end of it. So I hurried down to the Villa Primavera as a sort of haven of refuge in which I could reflect and think things over quietly. The estate was the property of an Australian named Dawson, and the villa was run as an hotel by him and his wife and two daughters during the winter months for the fishing. It was miles from anywhere, set in a desert of sand and low scrub carrying not more than one sheep to at least three acres. But the views over the

lower foothills of the Andes were lovely and a constant pleasure to the eye.

Mrs. Dawson had an extraordinary sort of affinity with birds. Some years before she had mended the broken leg of a wild duck. Thereafter that duck on its migration used to stop at Traful and fly in at the kitchen window. If the window was shut, she tapped on it till admitted—nor was she alone. Each year she brought a new mate with her and insisted on his coming, very shyly and unwillingly, into the kitchen too and being introduced to Mrs. Dawson. The ceremony over, they continued their flight southwards. On another occasion when I was there, a swallow nested in the eaves outside Mrs. Dawson's bedroom. When the young birds were just about ready to fly, their mother brought them in and deposited them in Mrs. Dawson's bed, where they spent the night before being fetched again the following morning. Those two incidents I witnessed myself, but there were others of a similar nature. It was quite uncanny.

The fishing was extremely good, and though the salmon were never known to go down to the sea, they tasted every bit as good as a fresh-run salmon in the spring in Scotland. Their average weight was between 8 and 15 lb., and the record up to the time that I was there was 27 lb. The first fish Lord Allenby, who was a beautiful fisherman, caught there was 23 lb. My own record was just over 20 lb. with my last cast at the last pool on my last evening before I went back for the last time to Buenos Aires. I happened to be fishing with a spoon, though I mostly used a fly, and had said to myself, "This is my last cast." It was all fishing from the bank, except where the Traful River left Traful Lake. There one rowed to a large rock rising out of the lake and fished from the top of it. Most of the big fish lay at the head of the river, and then seemed to get smaller in the lower reaches. All these lakes and rivers at the foot of the Andes are interconnected and there is no reason why the salmon should not eventually spread over all this area which stretches for several hundred miles. There is, too, an outlet to the sea via the Rio Negro, but its water is dirty, as the name "Black River" indicates, and the salmon apparently won't face it. Or perhaps they have lost their sea instinct. It is a fisherman's paradise, although inferior to the Chilean rivers on the other side of the Andes, where the rainbow trout in particular run up to 20 lb. Nevertheless, I remember once going on a picnic to the far end of the



Traful Lake and fishing in a reedy bay late in the evening. By dinner-time another Scot, Macrae, and myself had caught sixteen American brook trout, the smallest of which was over 4 lb.

To my great regret the British squadron in South American waters, comprising the subsequently famous *Exeter*, *Ajax*, and *Achilles*, never visited Buenos Aires whilst I was there. The C.-in-C. at that time was Admiral the Hon. Sir Matthew Best, and one of my most vivid experiences was waiting for the Admiral to land in a sea-plane on the Traful Lake. He came to pay me a call and to have a day's fishing, and to do so, as his flagship was in Chilean waters, he had to fly over the Andes. In itself it was no mean feat. The lake, too, was uncharted water and could be pretty rough at times. I can still see the plane coming from afar and circling round to make a perfect landing.

I was sorry to leave the Primavera that February 1937. It had been so peaceful down there, and my heart was full of profound misgivings about the future. In fact, I gave myself only just time to pack up and say good-bye to many friends. Partly because the Blue Star Line could not provide me with the accommodation which I required, and partly because I wanted an opportunity to rub up my German, I travelled back to England on the *Cap Arcona* of the German Hamburg-Amerika Line, and reached London at the end of March.

## CHAPTER XXIII

MY experiences in Berlin and the events leading up to the present war have been described in the book which I wrote on my return from Germany. Somebody once asked me at a public meeting why I called that book *Failure of a Mission*. Yet it seemed to me the obvious title for it. When I went to Berlin at the end of April 1937 I was convinced that Europe was drifting to catastrophe. But I was presumptuous enough to think, or rather to pray, that I had been selected, under Providence, for the post for the sole purpose, for I could see no other, of helping to avert another world war. I based my whole attitude, while I was in Berlin, on that presumption. I believed that to be my mission, and I failed. The Nazi movement, which could have been nipped in the bud at the beginning, had been allowed to grow from strength to strength. It might have been easy by vigorous action to discredit it in 1935 or 1936, though even in the latter year French resistance to the military reoccupation of the Rhineland would probably only have been met by a temporary German withdrawal—until a more favourable occasion—on the principle of *reculer pour mieux sauter*. Personally I have always felt that the psychological moment for allied resistance to Nazism was March 1935, when Hitler announced to the world that Germany was no longer bound by the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty, would reintroduce general conscription, and would rearm to the limit, with the national slogan of “guns instead of butter.” Anyway, by 1937 all hope or possibility of stopping Germany except by force from still further infractions of the Versailles Treaty had gone and, thanks to the indifference and neglect of Parliament over many years, force was no longer ours to wield. Britain had been too long at the mercy of its wishful thinkers, vote-catching politicians, and idealists to whom words meant everything and facts nothing; at the mercy of those who assumed that by outlawing war it could be prevented, that British safety was ensured by the phrase “collective security” and peace by idealistic speeches at Geneva; at the mercy, finally, of those who, blind to the rottenness of France, believed that all that was necessary to intimidate the dictator was to say “No” to him, quite regardless of the bitter fact that a German tank was not going to be stopped by a

man in blue holding up a truncheon. I felt, therefore, that I was going to Berlin on what looked like a forlorn hope. I had never anticipated or even dreamed of being selected for the post of H.M. Ambassador there, and was therefore the more convinced that I had been chosen, under the guidance of Providence, for the special task of helping to preserve the world from the horror of another and more ghastly war than the last. During the next two years in Germany I never had but that one objective in my mind, to work for peace, the greatest of all human blessings. I believed that to be the reason not only of my mission to Berlin but of my whole life. When, in spite of all my efforts to the last, war came, what other name could I give my book but *Failure of a Mission*?

Someone who was intelligent enough to have known better described my book in a monthly review as "Sir Neville Henderson's apology." No description could have been farther from the truth. If I had to begin all over again, I would still in all essentials act as I did during my two years in Berlin. I have searched my conscience, and it is clean. One thing in this world is quite impossible, and that is to please everyone, nor do I resent criticism, if my own conscience is clear. "Do what thy conscience bids thee do, from none but self expect applause," is the best motto for life. History will be the final judge, and I am personally content to leave the verdict to that ultimate tribunal. To-day, however, I still believe that my efforts for peace, even if in vain, prejudiced nobody and least of all Britain. When I wrote *Failure of a Mission* I had not then and I have not now the faintest thought of apologizing for any of my actions or for the policy which, under the direction of Mr. Neville Chamberlain, I followed during my term as Ambassador at Berlin. The book was written at the time with one sole aim, namely, to tell the simple man in the street the facts of the case truthfully and straightforwardly in a form which would be readable and therefore easily understood. How far I succeeded in that respect it is difficult to say, inasmuch as most of the criticisms of the book itself were made from the political angle. But I was greatly cheered many months afterwards by the opinion expressed by a shrewd American observer, Mr. Hugh Wilson, who was U.S. Ambassador in Berlin most of my time there and throughout the Munich crisis. In a book entitled *A Diplomat between Wars* Mr. Wilson refers to the difficulty of writing about history in which

one has played a part oneself without attempting to prove one's own foresight and perspicacity. "Sir Nevile Henderson," he says, "has published a book, *The Failure of a Mission*, which is a model in this respect; it is one of the few patently honest reports." I am content to abide by that verdict of my book. It endorses my purpose—my only purpose—in writing *The Failure of a Mission*, and it is an opinion which I value the more highly since it is that of a man with whom I worked at the time in the closest co-operation, and to whom I opened my heart unreservedly.

If things go wrong in this world, and they certainly did go wrong in 1938 and 1939, it is only human to search for scapegoats, though this disposition is not a markedly British one, but more prevalent elsewhere on the European continent. On that morning when the Munich Agreement was signed and I had left for Berlin, I wrote a short letter to Mr. Neville Chamberlain. I kept no copy, but its text was almost exactly as follows: "Dear P.M.—Millions of mothers will be blessing your name to-night for having spared their children the horrors of war; oceans of ink will flow hereafter in criticism of your actions." Nor was that difficult to foresee. The future was very uncertain, but I still hold, even in the light of wisdom after the event, that, firstly, the Munich compromise had to be tried as a final attempt to save the world from the catastrophe of war, and, secondly, that it was better to go to war in 1939 partially armed than in 1938 when we were completely unarmed. A friend of mine some years later asked Sir John Dill whether he would have preferred war in 1938 to 1939. His answer was, "I would rather it had been in 1940." No, I still hold that Mr. Chamberlain's only mistake at the time was on his return to have waved a piece of paper with Hitler's signature on it and said, "This means peace in our time," excusable though even that was when one realizes the exertions and temporary relief of a man over seventy in so responsible a position towards the youth of his country. Finally, I hold that it was as fortunate for Britain that he was Prime Minister at that time as it was to have Mr. Winston Churchill in 1940.

Others with greater inside knowledge of the facts of our capacity to go to war in 1938 than I, as H.M. representative living in Berlin, could possibly have, will doubtless in due course cross all the "i's" and dot all the "i's" in this respect, and/ please Heaven the British public and the British Parliament will benefit therefrom and learn the

lesson for the future. Nevertheless, I had attended a Cabinet meeting a month or so before Munich, and I was therefore alive to a number of the considerations involved. What were the cards in Mr. Chamberlain's hand when he set out for Munich to play his almost lone hand with Hitler? First of all, Britain's almost complete unpreparedness for war in every respect, from ships and tanks and aeroplanes to the fire-fighting services and anti-aircraft guns for London. Secondly, the absolute refusal and inability of the French Government in 1938 to fight for the Czechs, even though they were France's allies and not ours. Thirdly, the certainty of the immediate defeat of the Czechs and the complete ruin of that country long before any possible effective help could be afforded them from either France or Britain. Fourthly, the extreme reluctance of the Overseas Dominions of the British Empire to fight to prevent the Sudetens, who were Germans, from being incorporated under the right of self-determination in Germany. And fifthly, the knowledge that in the event of a Nazi attack on Czechoslovakia both Poland and Hungary would side with Germany with a view to securing their share of the spoils. Finally, there was the great consideration that war is a ghastly business and is never inevitable until the guns have actually started to go off; and the hope, however forlorn, that by means of a compromise, however imperfect, it might be possible, however unlikely, to avert it altogether.

I wonder who, in Mr. Chamberlain's position of responsibility and with full knowledge of the facts, would or even could have taken any other decision than he did? The vast majority of people in Britain approved his decision, though many, rightly, were full of misgivings as to its affording anything more than temporary relief. A few, such as Mr. Winston Churchill, were genuinely opposed to it. I still fail to understand on what grounds, except on premises that were certainly erroneous, such as that it was still possible to call Hitler's bluff. Those were grave errors in judgment, as they would have immediately discovered, since in 1938 it was useless to presume to stop a dictator by saying "No" to him when he knew himself to be infinitely readier and stronger than his opponents. Hitler had burnt his boats in a speech which he made to his fanatical supporters at the Sportspalast some days before Munich, and, as it was, nothing less than Mr. Chamberlain's persistence and Mussolini's intervention could have altered a deter-

mination which was already fixed. And even so I am convinced that he altered it most unwillingly. Of all the people who disliked the Munich Agreement, Hitler himself did so most of all. That to my mind is alone sufficient proof of the expediency of that agreement. For once he had failed to follow his instinct, which was to overrun Czechoslovakia in September 1938.

Nor do I even admit that the agreement in itself was so unjustifiable. It left a bitter taste in one's mouth to accept, because of our own weakness, a compromise with Nazism. But the Sudetens were Germans and there were 3,250,000 of them in a country governed by scarcely more than 7,000,000 Czechs. Certainly there could be no greater conceivable folly than ever to hand them back once again to be ruled by Czechs. So many potential fifth columnists in a small country would be too severe a handicap on its future peace and happiness and could only lead to renewed trouble. Inevitably the old Austrian line of demarcation included several hundred thousand Czechs, mostly introduced after 1920, but that is unavoidable in these frontier areas, as the Versailles Treaty makers found to their cost in 1919 and 1920. The only practical solution of this thorny problem would, in fact, seem to be an exchange of populations in all such areas.

No, the Munich agreement is one of those cases in which, if I were given the choice again, I would in no wise alter the advice I gave to H.M. Government in 1938. I gladly accept the title of "A man of Munich," and I would certainly prefer to be that than to be one of that band who would have recklessly plunged an unarmed Britain into war in that year. My conscience in that latter case would assuredly never have been clear again.

An Ambassador is a public servant, and as such does many things which may be distasteful to him as a private individual. Consorting so closely with the Nazis was one of them. Nevertheless, it seemed quite obvious to me that I could not begin to work for peace on the lines which Mr. Chamberlain had indicated unless I did so. Before I left London I had in fact told Mr. Eden, who was then Foreign Secretary, that after two months in Berlin I would probably be called a pro-Nazi, that that in itself might facilitate my task in Germany, and that I was indifferent to what people said in England so long as he, my chief, realized that I was pro nothing except British. Certainly for the job which I had to do, namely, to persuade the Germans to listen to

reason and to choose negotiation rather than resort to force, it was imperative to establish as close relations with the Nazis as possible. It would have been utterly futile to expect them to pay attention to me if I had adopted an attitude of icy aloofness. I was determined for that reason to go to the Nuremberg rally, which up to 1937 had been boycotted by the British, French, and American representatives. I would have failed in my duty to H.M. Government had I followed any other course. Diplomatic representatives abroad are not sent to their posts to dig pins into the Government to which they are accredited, but to do their utmost to work as closely as possible with it. Otherwise why send an Ambassador to Berlin at all? The right alternative would then have been to be represented by a *Chargé d'Affaires* and to restrict official and personal relations to a minimum. There would certainly have been no Munich if I had not established the good relations which I did with the Nazi leaders, and war would have come in 1938 instead of a year later. It must be left to the future to decide as to whether that would have been better or not for us and for the world generally. Personally, to-day, nearly four years later, I am entirely of the same opinion as I was then and, even in the light of wisdom after the event, would, as I have already said, act again exactly as I did when I was in Berlin.

Since my return home I have sometimes been charged with having kept H.M. Government inadequately informed of German's military strength. But the whole world knew that Hitler was making guns instead of butter, and was engaged in preparation for war on a four-year plan to make Germany independent of materials from outside. He never needed to conceal the fact. It was the politicians at home, not the diplomats abroad, who persisted in telling the British people that Hitler's rearmament programme was simply a bluff and that there would be no war. The correspondents of every newspaper in the world were sitting in Berlin and could have proclaimed, and in many cases did proclaim, Germany's intentions to the British public. None is so deaf as the adder that stoppeth her ear; and the British public—and Parliament in particular—believing there could be no war because they wished that there should be none, and lulled into a false security by the resonant slogans of the League of Nations, sat back and did nothing. Anyone in Britain (and there were many others besides Winston Churchill) who pressed for more ships or planes or

tanks was derided as a warmonger; and the House of Commons, the master of us all as Winston likes to call it, declined to Vote the necessary moneys or did so reluctantly after great delays and in entirely insufficient amounts. We too, like France, were looking into the mirror of the past and only awoke to reality when the mirror cracked before our eyes. In a sense we were all jointly responsible, though, as Lord Chatfield put it in a letter to *The Times*, "the main cause of our weakness was the rule laid by the Cabinet in the early twenties that we need not be ready for war for ten years." That rule, he continues, was abolished only in 1932 under pressure from the Chiefs of Staff, which meant that we could not be ready till 1942, "because, quite apart from the absence of political unity in respect of defence, of the atrophy which had struck our armament production, as well as because of the London Naval Treaty."

That was the crux of the whole matter. It certainly was not the ignorance by the competent Government departments, except possibly in minor details, over Germany's military preparations. So far as was compatible with Nazi secrecy, H.M. Government was kept fully informed of Germany's war effort. Every Ambassador (and this applies to the French and others as well as the British) has on his staff military experts, known as Service Attachés, for the Navy, Army, and Air Force, whose duty it is to report on such matters. They do so direct to their respective Ministries, the Admiralty, the War Office, and the Ministry for Air. Even if the Ambassadors had wished to minimize the Nazi war effort, and I certainly never did that, the reports of these experts would have provided the necessary correction. Unfortunately, our own Service Attachés were much handicapped by the secrecy of Nazi methods and by democracy's reckless publicity, which prevented them from being able to ask for reciprocity. Service Attachés, and there were two for each branch at H.M. Embassy, are recognized members of the Diplomatic staff, and as such can only spy within legitimate and authorized bounds. They could not, for instance, visit a factory and attend a manœuvre without the permission of the German Government, and it was easy for the latter to keep them away from anything or any area which it did not wish to be inspected. On the other hand, there were other sources better equipped for snooping which might have remedied this shortcoming, if they had been efficient. But even the Secret Service, like the study of tanks and the



science of propaganda, had been neglected after 1918 by British Governments and a House of Commons which flatly refused to consider war possible. A Secret Service cannot produce results without money.

There would be no object in these comments unless it were to stress the point, which, in view of the facile forgetfulness of the British public, will continually need stressing when the present war is at last over, namely, that if the British Empire is to survive as a unit and, in association with the United States, to play the great rôle which is its duty and its responsibility in the world of the future, we must at all costs always remain strong. The peace of the world cannot be kept by a policeman with a truncheon made of wood or rubber. That is merely a delusion for one's friends and grossly unfair to the policeman.

Doubtless the critics will find many grounds, major and minor, for the condemnation of British policy during my two and a quarter years' residence in Berlin, but the gravamen of their charges can be summed up in the word "appeasement." What, in fact, was Mr. Neville Chamberlain's policy toward Germany? He saw a mad world rushing to its own destruction because everybody had hitherto been afraid to grasp the Nazi nettle. Force to counter force was not at his disposal, thanks to the supineness of former Governments and an old Cabinet decision. Yet even had force been at his disposal, was not negotiation in any case preferable to the brutal and uncertain arbitrament of war? That was the policy that his detractors chose to condemn by misusing and abusing the good honest word "appeasement." The dictionaries will have to give it another meaning in future to conform to that which has been so falsely attributed to it during the past four or five years. With its present significance it is just as much a coined war-word as a "quisling" or a "fifth columnist." Appeasement as conceived by Mr. Chamberlain meant the search for just solutions by negotiation in the light of higher reason instead of by resort to force. The Nazi extremists envisaged no solutions except by the latter means, and, so far as I see it, those who objected to appeasement as represented by Mr. Chamberlain put themselves in the same category as the Nazi extremists, with considerably less justification since we had not force at our disposal, whereas they did have it.

The League of Nations, the hope of the world, in spite of the

magnificent work which it did in so many directions, had proved itself incapable of dealing with major issues. Though it recognized its duty to work for the renunciation of war, it proved unable to co-operate for the preservation of peace; which must in the end depend on the organization of overwhelming force on the side of justice and the principle of negotiation. A sad but incontrovertible fact, as so many incidents have borne witness from the beginning of its labours.

But quite apart from the inefficacy of the League of Nations in this respect there was one major, even vital, lacuna in the Versailles Treaty. It contained no clause prescribing that after a fixed period (say two or three or five years) it would come up for revision where necessary by negotiation. It would be utter folly if the next peace treaty does not contain such a clause. Peace treaties nowadays are complicated businesses and that of Versailles was a whole volume of many hundreds of pages. Can any negotiators in the first few months after a bloody war be so presumptuous as to regard their decisions, taken in the heat of bitter resentment and wrath, however legitimate, as just, final, and irrevocable? Retribution can and should be as stern and severe as is compatible with justice, but without justice no settlement can endure. Thousands of years ago Confucius declared that hatred should be requited by justice, and the verity stands to-day just as it did then. Why was Abraham Lincoln, one of the three greatest of all Americans, murdered? Because he refused to bow to the clamour of the hatred and resentment of the North, and insisted on justice for the South. Britain was more wisely led in the days of Wellington and Castlereagh, and by those who made the settlement with the Dutch republics after the Boer War. In 1919-1920 it was unfortunately not we who led, but a France inspired by the two worst counsellors in the world, Fear and Hate. Let us pray that any new treaty, be it at London or Geneva, on the ruins of the old League with a view to its reconstruction, be based on that single principle—justice. The Allied Powers under the guidance of Lord Curzon were wise enough at Lausanne in 1922-1923 to revise round a table the Treaty of Sèvres with Turkey. Unfortunately, they had not the courage to face the same situation as regards Germany, but preferred the dismal alternative of accepting under the threat of force one unilateral revision after another of the Versailles Treaty, as imposed upon them by Hitler and his gangsters. Those who still think that that treaty was a model for all time should

have said so a bit more loudly when the Nazi avalanche began to move and should have acted before it had got too weighty to be stopped.

The fact of the matter was that Mr. Chamberlain was courageous enough to attempt, at the eleventh hour, since he became Prime Minister only in May 1937, just a fortnight after I had reached Berlin, to grasp the nettle which everybody else had been too scared to touch with their finger-tips. The policy of treating Hitler as a joke, of abusing the Nazis and treating them as outcasts and at the same time of sitting still and doing nothing, had proved a dismal failure. Mr. Chamberlain felt that something had to be tried to save civilization from slipping over the abyss. He realized the fact, which the anti-appeasers seemed unable to do, that there was something rotten in the state of France, and that little reliance could be placed upon her alleged strength and vitality. British rearmament in 1937 was largely in the shadow category. He consequently endeavoured to use conciliation to persuade the Nazis to abandon their resolve to use force and to sit round a table with a view to negotiating. He may have been lacking in personal charm and that conciliatory manner so useful to a politician in a democratic House of Commons, but he was an honest and brave man. By an unjust world he has been labelled and maligned as the arch-appeaser in the false significance which has been given to that word. That is the way of a world which is always ready to worship its destroyers, such as Alexander, Caesar, or Napoleon, but finds little time to pay tribute to its saviours and peacemakers. Personally I honour him, and always shall, not only for his courage, capacity for responsibility, and disregard of public criticism, but because I still believe that the experiment of negotiating with Germany had to be tried, that we would never have entered the war as a united Empire in 1938 as we did in 1939, and that it was by the mercy of Providence that we were not plunged into war in 1938.

As for Czechoslovakia itself, if it erects a statue to some foreign statesman in Prague it should be that of Mr. Chamberlain. That it will not do so is merely one of the normal ironies of life and due to that human predilection just mentioned above for its destroyers rather than for its saviours. What resistance could the Czechs have offered to the German war machine in 1938? That was no minor consideration in my mind at that time. The Austrian *Anschluss* had radically modified the Czech military situation. Their Maginot line and mountain

defences in the north would have proved useless against an attack from Austria from the south. The most optimistic Czech General with whom I subsequently discussed the question as to how long the Czechs could have held out mentioned four months. Personally, I was pretty sure at the time, and am more so now, that four weeks would have been the maximum. After Munich Goering told me forty-eight hours would have sufficed. He was thinking in terms of his Air Force, and so far as that goes he was probably not far wrong. Even if Czechoslovakia had been able to hold out for four months, it could in that time have obtained no effective support from either the French or ourselves, and the devastation of Bohemia and Moravia and the loss of life would simply have been by that much greater. Poland and Hungary would have stabbed it in the back, as Russia did Poland a year later. There was just one thing and one only which the Czechs, if they had fought, might have done to help the Allied cause, and that was if they had had the foresight and resolution to destroy completely and utterly the great Skoda armament factories. Whether they would have done this, or thought of doing this, or indeed have had time to do it, is very doubtful.

For what was Czechoslovakia, if the truth be told—and certainly the British public never has yet been told. A very able colleague of mine, while Minister at Prague, beginning a despatch to the Foreign Office, wrote, "There is no such thing as Czechoslovakia." It was not a remark calculated to endear him to his superior authorities, but it was largely true. The old Austro-Hungarian Empire had been carefully dissected at Versailles on the principles of self-determination and nationality, and at the same time a microcosm of it called Czechoslovakia, based on complete disregard of those principles, was created in order to constitute a sort of buffer state to Germany. Of its 15,000,000 inhabitants, about half, between 7,000,000 and 8,000,000, were Czechs, rather more than 2,000,000 were Slovaks, rather less than 3,500,000 were Sudeten Germans, about 1,500,000 were Hungarians, and the rest Poles, Ruthenes, and Jews.

There was of course much superficial and, in the north, geographical justification for it. Bismarck before the era of aeroplanes and with his eye on the circle of mountains which so clearly define the boundaries of Bohemia in the north had said, "Who holds Bohemia, holds Central Europe." After the defeat of Germany it could not but appear

quixotic and reckless to hand over territory to the Reich which had never previously belonged to it. Yet what, then, of that Wilsonian and democratic principle of self-determination? Accorded to all others, it was refused to Germany when both the Austrians and the Sudetens in 1919 asked for inclusion in the German Reich. Moreover, as it happened, over 2,000,000 of those 3,250,000 Sudeten Germans lived, not inside Bohemia, but in those very frontier mountainous districts which marched with Germany. It was one of the capital and fatal errors of the Peace Treaty of Versailles.

The idea, or rather the wishful thought, no doubt was that in time Czechoslovakia might become a second Switzerland; but for that it lacked not only the time but the geographical features and advantages. The Czechs, tough and honest and industrious, did the best they could during their twenty years of freedom, but the handicap was too heavy and their political wisdom and experience not sufficiently developed. When the crisis arose, every one of the other races in the country, even the Slovaks, showed itself dissatisfied with Czech rule. If war had broken out with Germany in 1938, the Czech soldiers would have died fighting to the last man, but the Czech Government could not have counted with any confidence on the rest of its Army.

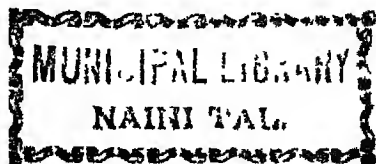
One of the problems at the end of this war will again be what to do with the Sudeten Germans. Any other solution than that based on the accepted democratic principle of self-determination would be folly and a crime against future generations. And let it be the same with Austria. Believe me, I wish our gallant Czech allies far too well ever to saddle them again with such an utterly indigestible and dangerous minority as the Sudeten.

Moreover, I am personally convinced that there will never be peace in Central Europe till all the Germans are united in a solid block. Frontiers can be demilitarized and populations can be exchanged, no doubt at considerable hardship to the present generation, but with infinite advantage to future ones. To leave large blocks of Germans outside Germany and on Germany's very frontiers is merely to invite the rising of another Hitler. The most liberal and least Prussian of the Germans have always sought and worked for German unity. It has been the link which bound the rest of Germany to Prussia, the original founder of German unity, and it will always be the link till that unity is finally achieved. To talk of splitting up Germany at the

end of the war is, to my mind, deplorably short-sighted and foolish, both on practical but still more on political grounds. Let Austria, or even the Rhineland, be given the opportunity to secede from the Reich, if they wish to do so at the end of the war in accordance with the recognized principle of self-determination, but do not restrict that principle as it was restricted in the Versailles Treaty.

For, whatever anyone may say to the contrary, there are two Germanies, and always will be, one aggressive and the other peace-loving, but both seeking German unity. To-day Nazism and Germany are one and indivisible and must be treated as such. But if we wish to encourage a peace-loving Germany (nor will anyone deny that a change of heart in Germany, if it is ever to be realized, must come from within), let us begin by removing the one main cause which has hitherto linked those two Germanies together. The one absolute fact which became increasingly apparent to me during my two years in Berlin was the internal conflict between the peace party in Germany on the one hand and the war party on the other. Numerically, the former was probably considerably stronger, but the war party won in the end, largely because there were too many Germans in Czechoslovakia, in Silesia, and in Poland. So long as that party could beat the drum for persecuted fellow-countrymen just outside the frontiers of the Reich, the hands of the peace party were tied and its efforts condemned to sterility.

Difficult though it is at this moment to be objective where Germany is concerned, it is because the Germans are a necessary part of Europe that when the Peace Treaty comes to be drawn up we shall be wise to recall the advice given by the Duke of Wellington to Lord Castlereagh in 1815: "Let us keep our great object, the genuine peace and tranquillity of the world, in our view, and shape our arrangements to provide for it."





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